Building Other People's Armies: Military Capacity Building and Civil-Military Relations during International Interventions

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Signed:

Abstract

Following state-building campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, the UK has increasingly eschewed large-scale intervention in favour of local proxy forces. Whilst this strategy might appeal to the war-weary and cash strapped interventionist, frequent use of military capacity building as a tool of foreign policy inevitably raises questions about the accountability of those local forces being trained. This thesis examines the exportation of Western concepts of civil-military relations into the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), carried out by the British-led International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) during intervention and post-conflict stabilisation in Sierra Leone. It argues that external interventionists can reshape local military culture, to promote both democratic civil-military norms and professional military effectiveness, but only through extensive institutional change. In Sierra Leone, IMATT attempted to change the organisational culture of the RSLAF by reforming its institutional mechanisms for socialisation, training, education and promotion. By inculcating a new normative ethos in a cohort of junior RSLAF officers, IMATT sought to promulgate cultural change throughout the military via a structured process of intra-service competition and generational replacement. This novel blend of internal and external processes of military change challenges existing scholarship on military innovation and adaptation, advancing our understanding of the relationship between military culture, military change, and external intervention. However, this process of institutional redevelopment and cultural change in the RSLAF proved to be both heavily contested and deeply political, ultimately leading to partial results. Consequently, IMATT's experience of RSLAF reform holds important implications for the study of civil-military relations and security sector reform, and with it, the conduct of contemporary military capacity building and liberal intervention.

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Contents

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACOTA	Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance
AFEC	Armed Forces Education Centre
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
AFTC	Armed Forces Training Centre
ANA	Afghan National Army
APC	All People's Congress
APWT	Annual Personal Weapons Test
BAST	Brigade Advisory and Support Team
CDF	Civil Defence Forces
CDS	Chief of Defence Staff
COIN	Counter-Insurgency
DDR(R)	Disarmament, Demobilisation, Re-education and Re-integration
DFID	Department for International Affairs
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
GOSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GPMG	General Purpose Machine Gun
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDF	Israel Defence Force
IMATT	International Military Advisory and Training Team
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
ISAT	International Security and Advisory Team
JTFHQ	Joint Task Force Headquarters
LEOBATT	Sierra Leonean Battalion (signifies operationally deployed unit)
MCB	Military Capacity Building
MOD	Ministry of Defence
MRP	Military Re-integration Programme
NERC	National Ebola Response Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ORBAT	Order of Battle
OSD	Operational Support Division (of the Sierra Leone Police)
PLP	Peace and Liberation Party
PME	Professional Military Education
PSO	Peace Support Operation
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
RSLAF	Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (post-war title)
RSLMF	Royal, then Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (pre-war title)
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLAF	Sierra Leone Armed Forces (wartime British designation)
SLP	Sierra Leone Police
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
SSD	Special Security Division (of the Sierra Leone Police)
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STTT	Short Term Training Team
UNAMID	United Nations Mission in Darfur
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone

1. Introduction: Building Other People's Armies

> 'In the management of native corps, ignorance of the language is attended with many and great disadvantages. The officer is in that case obliged to employ some native soldier as an interpreter; and those of this class who have, in menial stations, learned to speak a little English, are generally the most unworthy of confidence.'[1]
>
> Major Johnston, Third Ceylon Regiment, recalling operations in Ceylon in 1804.

> 'it was the nuance of training and our attempts to justify doing things "our way" which frequently got lost in translation…If you had a guy like Nawroz, whom we were allocated at the last minute for our first big op, who was too young, too impressionable and too nervous, you never knew if what you were saying was actually being translated…I later realised he would render my instructions into what he thought the ANA wanted to hear or, worse still, mistranslate ANA instructions he didn't like the sound of.'[2]
>
> Captain Hennessey, Grenadier Guards, recalling operations in Afghanistan in 2007.

The practical difficulties of training foreign military manpower are not new. However, at the end of the Cold War this activity took on a new meaning for Western interventionists. Historically, the West had raised or trained foreign military forces to maintain colonial empires, or else to create local proxies as a tool of power projection. But after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the West began to view military support to foreign states as a tool of liberal peacebuilding. Military training missions and defence reform projects were now expected to produce *democratically* acceptable local armies, not just militarily capable ones. The concept of Security Sector Reform (SSR) was born, envisaged as a means of underpinning liberal democratic peacebuilding in fragile (post-)conflict states. SSR programmes were subsequently conducted as a result of civil conflict, democratisation or international intervention in contexts as varied as Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Sudan, Rwanda, South Africa, post-unification Germany and Eastern Europe.[3]

Yet by the second decade of the new millennium, this concept faced sustained scrutiny. The campaigns of America's "Global War on Terror" saw

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[1] Major Johnston*, Narrative of the Operations of a Detachment in an Expedition to Candy, in the Island of Ceylon, in the Year 1804* (Dublin, James McGlashan, 1854), pp. 100-1.
[2] Patrick Hennessey, *Kandak: Fighting with Afghans* (London, Allen Lane, 2012), p. 51.
[3] Roy Licklider (ed.), *New Armies from Old: Merging Competing Military Forces after Civil Wars* (Washington, DC, Georgetown University Press, 2014); Lesley Anne Warner, 'Armed-Group Amnesty and Military Integration in South Sudan', *RUSI Journal*, 158:6 (2013), pp. 40-7; Marco Jowell, 'Cohesion Through Socialization: Liberation, Tradition and Modernity in the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF)', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 8:2 (2014), pp. 278-93; John Duffield, *World Power Forsaken: Political Culture, International Institutions and Germany Security Policy after Unification* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 1998); Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007*, (Birmingham, GFN-SSR, 2009).

increasing use of SSR as a means of stabilising new democracies abroad, but with increasingly less success. During "de-Baathification" in Iraq, the US-led coalition disbanded the country's existing armed forces in favour of a new military apparatus. Yet this fledgling Iraqi Army failed to live up to the ideals of SSR, being neither militarily effective nor particularly supportive of good democratic governance. The new Iraqi Government resisted US efforts to incorporate Sunni elements, and ultimately the Iraqi Army became a tool of Shia dominance rather than a symbol of a new, pan-sectarian nation. Faced with a reinvigorated Sunni insurgency, the Iraqi Army dramatically collapsed in 2014, abandoning northern Iraq in the process.[4] In Afghanistan, the new Afghan National Army (ANA) formed the central pillar of the Western coalition's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) strategy for disengagement and withdrawal. Yet despite a decade of capacity building, the ANA remains militarily weak and politically suspect, necessitating continued Western military aid to prop-up the country's ailing democracy.[5] In Mali, US Africa Command was publically embarrassed after the Malian officers it had trained to fight the Islamist-backed Tuareg rebellion subsequently overthrew their own government in 2012.[6] Having intervened in Libya to help depose Mummar Gadhafi, the British Government agreed to help build a new Libyan national army in Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire, but the programme was abruptly wound down

[4] Martin Chulov, 'Sons of Iraq Turned the Tide for the US. Now They Pay the Price', *The Guardian*, 13 May 2010, online at http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/may/13/sons-of-iraq-withdrawal-rebels, accessed on 27/01/2016; Martin Chulov, Fazel Hawramy & Spencer Ackerman, 'Iraq Army Capitulates to Isis Militants in Four Cities', *The Guardian*, 12 June 2014, online at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/11/mosul-isis-gunmen-middle-east-states, accessed 27/07/16; Philip Dermer, 'The "Sons of Iraq," Abandoned by Their American Allies', *The Wall Street Journal*, 1 July 2014, online at http://www.wsj.com/articles/philip-dermer-the-sons-of-iraq-abandoned-by-their-american-allies-1404253303, accessed on 27/01/2016; Ranj Alaaldin, 'Iraq: Growth of the Shia militia', *BBC News*, 17 April 2015, online at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-32349379, accessed 27/01/2016; Toby Dodge, *Iraq: From War to a New Authoritarianism* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2012); Ches Thurber, 'Militias as Sociopolitical Movements: Lessons from Iraq's Armed Shia Groups', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 25:5-6 (2014), pp. 900-23.

[5] Antonio Giustozzi, 'Auxiliary Force or National Army? Afghanistan's "ANA" and the Counter-Insurgency Effort, 2002-2006', *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, 18:1 (2007), pp. 45-67; Antonio Giustozzi, 'The Afghan National Army: Unwarranted Hope?', *RUSI Journal*, 154:6 (2009), pp. 36-42; Obaid Younossi, Peter Dahl Thruelsen, Jonathan Vaccaro, Jerry M. Sollinger & Brian Grady, *The Long March: Building an Afghan National Army* (Santa Monica, CA, RAND, 2009); Adam Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars: NATO Advisors and Military Adaptation in the Afghan National Army, 2001-2011', in Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga & James A. Russell (eds.), *Military Adaptation in Afghanistan* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 263-87.

[6] US AFRICOM, 'AFRICOM Commander Addresses Concerns, Potential Solutions in Mali', *American Forces Press Service*, 25 January 2013, online at http://www.africom.mil/NEWSROOM/Article/10234/general-ham-at-howard-university, accessed on 27/01/16.

following accusations that Libyan soldiers were perpetrating rapes and sexual assaults in the local town.[7]

The difficulty of building other people's armies during recent interventions has proved immense. General Petraeus, commanding training efforts in Iraq in 2004, likened the endeavour to 'constructing an aircraft in flight – while being shot at.'[8] Yet the poor record of SSR during these recent international interventions is particularly noteworthy, given the long histories of successfully producing local armed forces possessed by the intervening Western states. This is particularly true for Britain. During the Napoleonic Wars, the British Army successfully redeveloped the Portuguese military under the tutelage of the British Marshal Beresford.[9] During the Raj, the British Indian Army became perhaps the most extensive and notable colonial military force in existence, and eventually developed a complex system of regimental and ethnic identity, recruitment and racial categorisation to underpin British control of Indian military manpower.[10] More recently, the British Army supplied loan service and contracted officers to the Sultan of Oman's (largely mercenary) army during the Cold War, defeating the communist-inspired Dhofar insurgency and tacitly supporting a palace coup to improve its fighting effectiveness.[11] However, such cases are primarily examples of Military Capacity Building (MCB), and so differ

[7] British Government, 'Libyan Armed Forces to be Trained in UK', 9 July 2013, online at https://www.gov.uk/government/news/libyan-armed-forces-to-be-trained-in-uk, accessed 27/06/16; David Keller, 'Bassingbourn Libyan Troops "Threw Village Upside Down"', *BBC News*, 15 May 2015, online at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-32687137, accessed 27/06/16; Nadia Khomami, 'Libyan Soldiers who Assaulted Women at Army Base Seek Asylum in UK', *The Guardian*, 30 September 2015, online at https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/sep/30/libyan-soldiers-assaulted-women-seek-asylum-uk, accessed on 27/06/16; Mark Tran, 'Two Libyan Soldiers Jailed for Raping Man in Cambridge', *The Guardian*, 15 May 2015, online at https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/may/15/two-libyan-soldiers-jailed-for-raping-man-in-cambridge, accessed 27/06/16.
[8] Cited in David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 20.
[9] Harold Livermore, 'Beresford and the Reform of the Portuguese Army', in Paddy Griffith (ed.), *A History of the Peninsular War, Volume IX: Modern Studies of the War in Spain and Portugal, 1808-1814* (London, Greenhill, 1999), pp. 121-44; Malyn Newitt & Martin Robson, *Lord Beresford and British Intervention in Portugal, 1807-1820* (Lisbon, ICS, 2003); Martin Robson, *Britain, Portugal and South America in the Napoleonic Wars: Alliances and Diplomacy in Economic Maritime Conflict* (London, I.B. Tauris, 2011).
[10] David Killingray & David Omissi (eds.), *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers, c.1700-1964* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1999); Kaushik Roy, 'The Construction of Regiments in the Indian Army: 1859-1913', *War in History*, 8:2 (2001), pp. 127-48; Tarak Barkawi, 'Subaltern Soldiers: Eurocentricism and the Nation-State in the Combat Motivation Debates', in Anthony King (ed.), *Frontline: Combat and Cohesion in the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 24-45.
[11] Ranulph Fiennes, *Where Soldiers Fear to Tread* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1975); Peter Thwaites, *Muscat Command* (London, Leo Cooper, 1995); John E. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies: The Sultanate's Struggle for Supremacy* (London, Saqi, 2007).

somewhat from SSR, in that they typically lacked the latter's liberal normative political aspirations.

Yet even as Western approaches in Iraq and Afghanistan floundered, the British military experienced some notable success in SSR elsewhere. In 2000, Britain intervened militarily in Sierra Leone's civil war to stabilise its nascent democratic government. The British recognised that the Sierra Leonean military itself had significantly contributed to the country's decade-long insurgency; both in its military impotence on the battlefield, and through its repeated political interjections. Indeed, in the years between colonial independence in 1961 and British intervention, the country was subjected to at least seven military coups or coup attempts. Subsequently, the British-led International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT) set about creating a new, militarily effective and democratically accountable armed force. By 2013, the rebuilt Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) appeared dramatically transformed. It had supported three democratic elections, providing substantial logistical and security support during two, including one which saw a transition of power between the incumbent government and the political opposition.[12] It had also deployed internationally on peacekeeping operations in Darfur and Somalia, and would go on to spearhead the country's emergency response to the West African Ebola Pandemic, displaying a degree of military effectiveness it had so evidently lacked during the country's own civil war.[13] Thus, IMATT's experience of reforming the RSLAF is a notable outlier in recent examples of externally-led defence reform.

This thesis will examine the process of military change in Sierra Leone. It seeks to understand *how* and *why* IMATT succeeded in producing normative cultural change in the RSLAF, when similar Western endeavours elsewhere so evidently foundered. It seeks to address persistent and fundamental questions

[12] David H. Ucko, 'Can Limited Intervention Work? Lessons from Britain's Success Story in Sierra Leone', *Journal of Strategic studies* (2015), pp. 1-31, online first at http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01402390.2015.1110695?needAccess=true, accessed on 05/09/16; Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation in Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*; Ashlee Godwin & Cathy Haenlein, 'Security-Sector Reform in Sierra Leone: The UK Assistance Mission in Transition', *RUSI Journal*, 158:6 (2013), pp. 30-9; Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone 1997-2013: Defence, Diplomacy and Development in Action* (London, Routledge, 2014).

[13] Peter Albrecht & Cathy Haenlein, 'Sierra Leone's Post-Conflict Peacekeepers', *RUSI Journal*, 160:1 (2015), pp. 26-36; Ashlee Godwin & Cathy Haenlein, 'Learning From Ebola in Sierra Leone', *RUSI Newsbrief*, 26 January 2015, online at https://rusi.org/publication/newsbrief/learning-ebola-sierra-leone, accessed 27/06/16.

about the conduct of externally-led defence reform, which have significant implications for academic and policy understandings of SSR's viability in peacebuilding, and its strategic utility to liberal interventionists. In particular, this thesis will address the following research questions:

1. Can external interventionists create genuine cultural change in foreign armed forces?
2. How does the interaction between external actors and internal military processes produce or inhibit military change?
3. What is the relationship between military effectiveness and military accountability during such processes; that is, how do SSR and MCB interact?

The process of military change pursued by IMATT in the RSLAF provides an opportunity to explore how externally-led military change can succeed, rather than why it can fail. As such, this study aims to shine light on the possibilities, as well as the limitations, for building other people's armies. Moreover, by examining the case of the RSLAF, this thesis will offer a notable contribution to the study of military change more broadly, by providing new insights into its causes, conduct and consequences in Sierra Leone.

A number of explanations for this incongruity of outcomes have already been advanced, but with little consensus. The British Army's own guide to its lessons learnt in Sierra Leone concluded that IMATT's success stemmed from the small size of the country and its armed forces, and thus the relative simplicity of the undertaking.[14] Equally, in both Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, the West effectively intervened in an on-going civil war. In Sierra Leone, however, the British military had far more success in permanently altering the balance of power on the ground, enabling the integration of formerly warring combatants from both sides into the new national army.[15] Yet even here, Albrecht and Jackson have concluded that the advances seen in the RSLAF may yet prove illusory, arguing that to a significant extent they have been reliant

[14] British Army, 'Sierra Leone Case Study: The British Army's Contribution 1997 – 2015', Warfare Branch (Warminster, February 2016), p. 44.
[15] Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs, 'Bringing the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly into the Peace Fold: The Republic of Sierra Leone's Armed Forces after the Lomé Peace Agreement', in Licklider, *op. cit.*, pp. 195-212.

on the continued presence of Western observers – just as in Afghanistan.[16] Ultimately, each case of international intervention is subject to its own unique circumstances, and outcomes are inevitably influenced by whether contextual conditions are conducive to success or failure. Yet IMATT's relative success in changing the RSLAF – notwithstanding Albrecht and Jackson's concerns – cannot be explained by context alone, not least because a number of earlier attempts at defence reform in Sierra Leone had already failed. A closer examination of the *conduct* of military change during international interventions is required, specifically, how the *process* of change led to the results it did in a successful example like Sierra Leone.

Relatively little theoretical attention has been paid to the problem of externally-directed military change, although the use of military training missions as a tool of international relations has received some scholarly treatment. Focusing on MCB, Stoker argued that such missions have typically been conducted in support of the diplomatic, economic or security interests of the intervening (or donor) state.[17] In nineteenth-century Chile, Prussia deployed military advisors to train and advise the Chilean armed forces with relative success, while at the same time encouraging sales of German armaments.[18] The interwar French mission to Poland privileged French naval exports to such a degree, that in Stoker's view, France had actually undermined the security of her ally.[19] Consequently, a number of recipients of military aid have attempted to ensure that Western military training was, as far as possible, provided on their own terms. In Mehmed Ali's Egypt, for example, Western trainers appeared more like mercenaries hired to implement change than agents of Western intervention.[20] Equally, the adoption of Western military practices in a number of non-Western states during the nineteenth century has been described as a process of strategic emulation, in which the drivers of change lay primarily in the ambitions of the recipient; something which helps explain the

[16] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*
[17] Donald Stoker, 'The History and Evolution of Foreign Military Advising and Assistance, 1815–2007', in Donald Stoker (ed.), *Military Advising and Assistance: From Mercenaries to Privatization, 1815-2007* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2008), pp. 1-10.
[18] William F. Sater, 'The Impact of Foreign Advisors on Chile's Armed Forces, 1810-2005', in *ibid.*, pp. 26-41.
[19] Donald Stoker, 'Buying Influence, Selling Arms, Undermining a Friend: The French Naval Mission to Poland and the Development of the Polish Navy, 1923-1932', in *ibid.*, pp. 42-60.
[20] John P. Dunn, 'Missions or Mercenaries? European Military Advisors in Mehmed Ali's Egypt, 1815-1848', in *ibid.*, pp. 11-25.

uneven military modernisation of Ottoman Turkey in comparison to Meiji Japan.[21] While these cases offer some insight into the complexities of increasing local military effectiveness, they highlight how donors have historically lacked normative preferences about the political impact of local military change, providing it furthered their strategic agendas.

In cases where military aid programmes did pursue donors' overt political preferences about the form of local government, their success was typically limited. In nineteenth and early twentieth century Afghanistan, for instance, both the British and the Turks supported Afghan leaders attempting to create a centralised state by training a nascent Afghan army. As Cronin observed, these efforts fell foul of the strong conservative, regional and ethnic dynamics in Afghan society, exacerbating tensions between the centre and the periphery, modernity and tradition, and resulting in limited tangible military improvement.[22] Similar US attempts to export positivist military and governmental ideologies to their periphery in the Americas during the interwar years also ultimately failed.[23] A recent RAND study for the US Government concluded that building partner states' military capacity works best when both parties share the same political objectives and vision.[24] Yet even here, little attention has been paid to the *conduct* of externally-led military change, and even less consensus exists among the few scholarly forays into the field. For example, Nilsson and Kovacs' comparative study of post-conflict military change in Sierra Leone and Liberia noted that the British approach in Sierra Leone was far more reformist than the US-led strategy in Liberia, which, much as in Iraq, radically disbanded existing institutions and started again from scratch. Yet the pair concluded that while each approach had its merits and risks, both might prove equally unsustainable.[25] Conversely, one British military assessment of IMATT in Sierra

[21] Emily O. Goldman, 'The Spread of Western Models to Ottoman Turkey and Meiji Japan', in Theo Farrell & Terry Terriff, *The Sources of Military Change: Culture, Politics, Technology* (Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp. 41-68.
[22] Stephanie Cronin, *Armies and State-Building in the Modern Middle East: Politics, Nationalism and Military Reform* (London, I.B. Tauris, 2014), pp. 83-132.
[23] Eric R. Rittinger, 'Exporting Professionalism: US Efforts to Reform the Armed Forces in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, 1916-1933', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 26:1 (2015), pp. 136-157.
[24] Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, Beth Grill, Stephanie Young, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Joe Hogler & Christine Leah, *What Works Best When Building Partner Capacity and Under What Circumstances?* (Santa Monica, CA, RAND, 2013).
[25] Desirée Nilsson & Mimmi Söderberg Kovacs, 'Different Paths of Reconstruction: Military Reform in Post-War Sierra Leone and Liberia', *International Peacekeeping*, 20:1 (2013), pp. 2-16.

Leone by an officer who served there, Lieutenant Colonel Simpson, asserted that change resulted from the process of British military mentoring, which he described as akin to 'moral suasion'.[26] Yet in his ethnographic examination of mentoring in the Afghan government during ISAF's intervention, Rosén concluded that mentoring only really reflected the interventionists' philosophy of 'neoliberal governmentality', and remained decidedly agnostic as to its efficacy.[27]

A substantial body of literature examining the causes and conduct of military change in Western armed forces does exist. Here, scholars like Posen initially assumed that armed forces are, by their nature, resistant to radical change, and so sought to understand how and why this phenomenon occurs. The relative importance of civilian intervention into the military organisation, the structure of civilian governmental institutions, and competition within and between services were all subsequently advanced in explanation.[28] Studies have equally highlighted the importance of the ingrained codes of conduct, behaviour and attitude which permeate a military and can influence its proclivity to change – even over civilian preferences or battlefield pressures.[29] More recently, attention has turned to processes of adaptation during warfare, which can lead to the adoption or refinement of new military practices and paradigms from the grass roots of the military hierarchy rather than the top.[30] These various concepts provide a useful insight into the dynamics of change in military organisations, and underline the importance of *process* in understanding the nature and presence (or otherwise) of military change. In of themselves,

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[26] Lieutenant Colonel Harold Simpson MBE, 'UK Sponsored Stabilisation and Reform in Sierra Leone 2002-2013: A Unique Case or a Template for Future Intervention(s)?', Sandhurst Occasional Papers No. 19 (Camberley, 2014).
[27] Frederik Ferdinand Rosén, 'No Words will Deliver Anything: Coaching and Mentoring as Neoliberal Governance Strategy in the Afghan State Administration', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 5:2 (2011), pp. 154-5.
[28] Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1984); Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1991); Deborah D. Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1994).
[29] Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1997); Theo Farrell, 'World culture and the Irish Army, 1922-1942', in Farrell & Terriff, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-90.
[30] Adam Grissom, 'The Future of Military innovation Studies', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 29:5 (2006), pp. 910-3; Theo Farrell, 'Improving in War: Military Adaptation and the British in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006–2009', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33:4 (2010), pp. 567-594; Robert T. Foley, Stuart Griffin & Helen McCartney, '"Transformation in contact": Learning the Lessons of Modern War', *International Affairs*, 87:2 (2011), pp. 253-70.

however, they shed little light on how external interventionists may encourage change in foreign armed forces.

Nonetheless, the literature on national military change has significant potential to inform theoretical understandings of similar *externally-led* processes, as Grissom has recently highlighted. In a notable attempt to bridge the literatures on military change and MCB, Grissom examined Western attempts to develop the ANA during the Western intervention and counter-insurgency (COIN) campaign in Afghanistan.[31] Afghanistan witnessed several phases of internationally-sponsored army building following Western intervention in 2001. The first coalition attempt to produce a new central army for the Afghan Government saw the British Army raise a Western-style multi-ethnic infantry battalion to secure Kabul. Called the Afghan National Guard, this effort ultimately proved abortive.[32] The subsequent creation of an all-volunteer, multi-ethnic national army was driven by the West, somewhat over the top of Afghan political opposition.[33] As the Taliban insurgency deepened across the country, the ANA was significantly expanded, and subsequently provided with increasingly complex Western weapons and equipment, including vehicles, armour, artillery and an air force. The rapid expansion of the ANA to around 170,000 by 2011 was accompanied by significant coalition investment in ANA institutions; first those pertaining to recruitment and training, and subsequently logistical support.[34] Indeed, the rapid growth of the ANA in the size, shape and structure of a modern Western army has been described variously as 'isomorphism' and 'coercive emulation'.[35] This institutional development was accompanied by extensive use of ISAF training teams to mentor ANA units.[36] Yet the combat performance of the ANA remained abysmally low. By the end of 2011, ISAF judged that two thirds of ANA units were still incapable of operating without coalition military support, despite having already watered down the

[31] Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars', *op. cit.*
[32] Imperial War Museum Audio Archive, 22901 Reel 11, 'Banerjee, Dilip Kumar (IWM interview)', Interview with British civilian war photographer Dilip Bannerjee, 4 April 2002.
[33] Giustozzi, 'Auxiliary Force or National Army?', *op. cit.*; Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars', *op. cit.*
[34] Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars', *op. cit.*, pp. 264-72; Giustozzi, 'Auxiliary Force or National Army?', *op. cit.*; Younossi *et al*, *op. cit.*
[35] Christiaan Davids & Joseph Soeters, 'Payday in the Afghan National Army: From Western Administrative Liabilities to Local Realities', in Giuseppe Caforio (ed.), *Advances in Military Sociology: Essays in Honor of Charles C. Moskos, Part A* (Bingley, Emerald Group, 2009), pp. 285-303; Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars', *op. cit.*, p. 279.
[36] See Hennessey, *op. cit.*

metrics of operational capability.[37] Such was the tactical and institutional under-development of the ANA, that Giustozzi argued that it remained little more than a client auxiliary force for ISAF in the imperialist tradition.[38]

Informed by literature on military adaptation, Grissom concluded that the very presence of international forces mentoring the ANA precluded any profound indigenous military change. Instead, the presence of large numbers of ISAF troops, typically better prepared and more willing to fight than the ANA, effectively insulated the Afghan military from the adaptive pressures of combat which might otherwise have driven improvements in combat effectiveness. Such change as was carried out was the product of reforms imposed externally by ISAF and implemented from the top down. Grissom found that even these reforms proved ineffective, however. Competing political and warlordic factions in the ANA were able to subvert ISAF-directed reforms of the Afghan military, largely because the presence of ISAF combat troops insulated the ANA from existential levels of military threat. Thus, where externally-desired changes offered advantages to competing elites within the ANA, they were easily implemented, but the complex patron-client power structures of the ANA (mirroring wider Afghan society) served to undermine the utility of changes, as rival political networks worked covertly to appropriate and apportion the spoils of Western reform. This held true even when ISAF pursued military changes that were somewhat inappropriate to the situation in Afghanistan – such as the mechanisation of the ANA – but which still provided opportunities for enrichment. However, when ISAF attempted to implement changes that would threaten the existing power dynamics of the ANA – such as by increasing accountability and transparency, or by formalising certain institutional processes – reforms were actively resisted by military elites and ultimately failed, despite the improvements in military effectiveness such changes might bring.[39]

Grissom concluded that externally-led top-down change in the ANA proved incapable of displacing the pernicious but ingrained power structures of the ANA, even as the force appeared to mimic Western military organisation

[37] Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars', *op. cit.*, p. 273.
[38] Giustozzi, 'Auxiliary Force or National Army?', *op. cit.*
[39] Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars', *op. cit.*, pp. 276-81. See also, Giustozzi, 'The Afghan National Army: Unwarranted Hope?', *op. cit.*; Davids & Soeters, *op. cit.*; Jason Wood, 'The Importance of Cohesion in the Afghan National Army to Post-Transition Afghanistan', *RUSI Journal*, 157:4 (2012), pp. 42-7.

and structure. Simultaneously, the force was insulated from the adaptive pressures of combat – which might have impelled change from below in order to improve combat performance – by the presence of the very international troops demanding ANA transformation.[40] Indeed, the pressures of combat acted unevenly on ISAF compared to the ANA, limiting ISAF's ability to pursue change in the ANA. As one senior British officer serving in the US command responsible for training the ANA observed, 'the imperative was the training and the education of the force [the ANA]. Unfortunately the operational imperative was to fight and win battles, and there's always a tension between those two things'. Consequently, the ISAF focus was not on the profound institutional development of the ANA, but 'to get people through the system and trained as quickly as possible' for the fight.[41] Grissom concluded that externally-directed defence reforms will inevitably be unsuccessful, unless the West's desired military changes work with prevailing social and political systems rather than attempt to displace them – as the concept of SSR implicitly does.[42]

This explanation of limited ANA development is important, because it suggests that the prospects for externally-led military change are a product of an interaction between existing theoretical understandings of national military change, and the political and social context in which interventionists act. Moreover, it suggests that when local military and political cultures are not receptive to change, this interaction is ultimately flawed. Yet this observation is itself problematic. Grissom described the complex networks of patron-client relationships prevalent in the ANA as a 'limited access order',[43] a system elsewhere known as neo-patrimonialism.[44] He found that the lack of adaptive pressure on the ANA meant that ISAF was unable to displace these practices, and so the ANA's organisational culture precluded fundamental change. The Sierra Leonean military displayed equally neo-patrimonial tendencies,[45] and

[40] Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars', *op. cit.*, pp. 275-6.
[41] Interview with Participant A14, a retired British senior officer who served in the Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan (CSTC-A) in 2008, conducted in Wiltshire on 21 September 2015.
[42] Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars', *op. cit.*, p. 282.
[43] *Ibid.*, p. 276.
[44] Patrick Chabal & Jean-Pascal Daloz, *Africa Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument* (Oxford, James Currey, 1999); Morten Bøås, 'Liberia and Sierra Leone: Dead Ringers? The Logic of Neopatrimonial Rule', *Third World Quarterly*, 22:5 (2001), pp. 697-723.
[45] Magnus Jörgel & Mats Utas, 'The Mano River Basin Area: Formal and Informal Security Providers in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone', Swedish Defence Research Agency

arguably, was equally insulated from adaptive pressure. Yet the RSLAF displayed a far greater degree of military change than the ANA. This discrepancy challenges Grissom's understanding of externally-led military change. Such incongruity of outcomes in ostensibly similar conditions raises a number of important questions, with potentially dramatic implications for our understanding of how military change actually occurs in such circumstances. Namely, how did IMATT successfully produce military change in the RSLAF? How do processes of externally-directed military change successfully interact with – and in turn affect – local military and political cultures? And what is the relationship between top-down reforms and bottom-up adaptation during such processes? Can other theories of Western military change usefully explain externally-led military change in Sierra Leone?

This thesis seeks to advance current understandings of externally-led military change by contributing new insights into the relationship between external intervention and local military culture, with potentially profound implications for the wider scholarship on military change and innovation. By examining the relatively successful process of externally-led military change in the RSLAF, this thesis will develop Grissom's concept of 'extrinsic' military change. In so doing, it will compare the experience of IMATT's interaction with the RSLAF against the extant literature on military change, adaptation and innovation, in order to explain this incongruity of outcomes. While Grissom's study of ISAF reform in the ANA acts as a starting point for the development of theoretical concepts, and provides a useful comparator, IMATT's reform of the RSLAF presents an opportunity to examine these concepts in a new context. The initial literature on military transformation largely examined peacetime military change, and recent studies of adaptation have focused on wartime military change. However, IMATT's reform of the RSLAF largely occurred in a fragile post-conflict period of political transition which bridged these two environments. Indeed, the uniqueness of this transitional environment has led to calls for a new policy concept of 'Security Sector Stabilisation', to fill the doctrinal gap between active warfighting and later post-conflict SSR in a

(Stockholm, 2007); David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (Oxford, James Currey, 2005).

permissive environment.[46] Thus, understanding the changes seen in the RSLAF's organisational culture during the period of IMATT's intervention will significantly advance that state of current theory on military change, by notably providing new insights into the role of local military culture and external intervention during such processes.

Understanding how externally-led military change can successfully occur is all the more important, given the significant potential implications for Western policy on international intervention. The end of the Cold War appeared to represent the triumph of liberal democracy, and scholars like Fukuyama heralded the coming 'liberal moment' and 'the end of history'.[47] Yet, at the same time, this liberal vision appeared beset by new wave of disorder and state collapse prompted by disintegration of the Warsaw Pact. Kaplan's influential essay 'The Coming Anarchy' predicted a future of intra-state conflict, organised crime, economic scarcity and societal collapse, and prominently cited Sierra Leone's raging civil war as an example of times to come.[48] Observing the rising tide of ethnic conflict in the Balkans, Kaldor concluded that a fundamentally new form of war had emerged, characterised by identity politics, organised crime and sub-state violence.[49] Concern at this spike in insurgency, civil wars, and state failure led to a flurry of academic in interest in ethnic conflict and civil war.[50] It also led to the development of the concept of 'liberal peacebuilding'. Liberal peacebuilding sought to address sub-state instability overseas by exporting (or re-building) capable state institutions in the liberal Western model. It thus reflected both Western ideological confidence in the post-Cold War status quo, and Western concern at the impact of instability in the international

[46] Peter Dahl Thruelsen, 'Security Sector Stabilisation in a Non-permissive Environment', Danish Defence College (Copenhagen, 2010), online at http://forsvaret.dk/FAK/Publikationer/Research%20Papers/Documents/Security%20Sector%20Stabilisation.pdf accessed on 29/09/14.
[47] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1992)
[48] Robert D. Kaplan, 'The Coming Anarchy: How Scarcity, Crime, Overpopulation, Tribalism, and Disease are Rapidly Destroying the Social Fabric of our Planet', *The Atlantic Monthly*, (February 1994).
[49] Mary Kaldor, *New & Old Wars; Organised Violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1999).
[50] See for example, Timothy D. Sisk, *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts* (Washington, DC, United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996); James Fearon & David D. Laitin, 'Ethnicity, Insurgency, and Civil War', *American Political Science Review*, 97:1 (February 2003), pp. 75-90; Barbara F. Walter & Jack Snyder (eds.), *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention* (New York, NY, Columbia University Press, 1999); Susan L. Woodward, 'Do the Root Causes of Civil War Matter? On Using Knowledge to Improve Peacebuilding Interventions', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 1:2 (June 2007), pp. 143-170.

system. It was seen as a logical response to the perceived causes of instability overseas: the absence or ineffectiveness of state institutions. In line with Western perceptions of good governance, theorists concurred that liberal democracy was the form of political order best placed to ensure long-term stability in these newly reconditioned states, though academic opinion varied as to the precise order in which electoral systems and governance institutions should be constituted.[51]

The concept of SSR developed as a corollary of liberal peacebuilding. There was a growing recognition in the international development community that development, both in terms of liberal peacebuilding and poverty alleviation, could only take place in a secure environment. Yet the ill-disciplined and predatory armed forces of many weak or illiberal states – once tolerated because of their strategic utility during the Cold War – were now recognised as one of the major threats to human security.[52] As Rotberg argued, in the hierarchy of political goods, 'None is as critical as the supply of security, especially human security.'[53] Thus, rebuilding military institutions as a means of ensuring state security was insufficient; these new security institutions had to be accountable to their elected governments and civil societies, in line with the principles of good governance and democratic development. The resulting 'security-development nexus' required a normative agenda in defence reform, in which Western ideals of the relationship between state, citizen and the military were exported along with the model of the democratic liberal Western nation-state. The practical processes adopted in pursuit of this goal became known as SSR.[54] As Barkawi and Jackson have observed, such processes are still

[51] I. William Zartman (ed.), *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner, 1995); Robert I. Rotberg (ed.), *When States Fail: Causes and Consequences* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004); Roland Paris, *At War's End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004); Francis Fukuyama, *State-Building: Governance and World Order in the 21st Century* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2004).

[52] Timothy Edmunds, 'Security Sector Reform', in Thomas C. Bruneau & Florina Cristiana Matei (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2013), pp. 48-60.

[53] Zartman, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[54] See for example, The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *The OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice* (2007); Nicole Ball, 'The Evolution of the Security Sector Reform Agenda', in Mark Sedra (ed.), *The Future of Security Sector Reform* (Waterloo, ON, Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2010), pp. 29-44; Nicole Ball & Dylan Hendrickson, 'Trends in Security Sector Reform (SSR): Policy, Practice and Research', Conflict, Security and Development Group Working Papers No. 20

defined by asymmetric power relations between states, in which the development of local armed forces forms part of a wider metropolitan project of order-making primarily concerned with the establishment of formal state sovereignty in a fashion conducive to the maintenance of the status quo international system.[55] But in contrast to imperial or Cold War programmes, which focused on producing effective clients or proxies, either by direct control or through a "train and equip" paradigm of military aid, SSR privileged normative change in the civil-military behaviour of armed forces alongside their effectiveness. SSR was thus envisaged as a holistic process, encompassing the military, other formal security institutions like the police and intelligence agencies, non-state or non-traditional security providers like militias, justice systems, and governance or oversight mechanisms.[56]

Yet the legacy of Western intervention and state-building during the "wars of contested choice" which followed the 9/11 terrorist attacks has seen a reaction against liberal peacebuilding and SSR. The COIN doctrines developed by Western armed forces during these campaigns have been described as 'armed nation building',[57] while the idea of nation-building has itself been problematized.[58] Scholars have argued that the neo-conservative approach to liberal peacebuilding adopted in Iraq and Afghanistan was fundamentally illiberal in character,[59] and that SSR efforts during these campaigns represented

(London, 2009), online at: www.securityanddevelopment.org/pdf/CSDG%20Paper%2020.pdf, accessed 25/03/15.

[55] Tarak Barkawi, '"Defence Diplomacy" in North-South Relations', *International Journal*, 66 (2011), pp. 597-612; Paul Jackson, 'Security Sector Reform and State Building', *Third World Quarterly*, 32:10 (2011), pp. 1803-1822.

[56] Paul Cornish, 'The Military Dimension of Security Sector Governance in Complex Power-sharing Arrangements', in Marc Weller & Barbara Metzger (eds.), *Settling Self-Determination Disputes: Complex Power-Sharing in Theory and Practice* (Leiden, Nijhoff, 2008), pp. 571-597. SSR is also intrinsically bound to the post-conflict disarmament, demobilisation and re-integration (DDR) of former combatants. See for example, Nat J. Colletta, Markus Kostner & Ingo Wiederhofer, 'Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration: Lessons and Liabilities in Reconstruction', in Rotberg*, op. cit.*, pp. 170-181.

[57] Anthony H. Cordesman, Adam Mausner & Jason Lemieux, *Afghan National Security Forces: What it Will take to Implement the ISAF Strategy* (Washington, DC, Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2010), p. 219.

[58] Francis Fukuyama (ed.), *Nation-Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq* (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2006).

[59] Aidan Hehir, 'The Myth of the Failed State and the War on Terror: A Challenge to the Conventional Wisdom', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 1:3 (2007), pp. 307-332; Donette Murray, 'The Love That Dare Not Speak its Name? George W. Bush: State and Nation Building in Afghanistan, 2001–2', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 7:3 (2013), pp. 241-258.

little more than cynical 'exit strategies'.[60] Clare Short, the former British cabinet minister for the Department for International Development who promoted the concept of SSR, later stated that the War on Terror represented the death of a liberal 'humanitarian surge'.[61] The 9/11 attacks are widely perceived to have heralded a general 'securitisation' of development.[62] More profoundly, critical scholars have argued that the failures of SSR and state-building in Iraq and Afghanistan underline the inherent contradictions in liberal peacebuilding agendas. Park, for example, asserted that state-building is premised on a Western cultural obsession with the rule of law as the basis of political order, a myth she described as responsible for imposing culturally inappropriate governance and justice mechanisms during peacebuilding.[63] Others have argued that the tenets of centralised Weberian governance have little resonance in societies where political authority is not defined by the same principles.[64] In general, critical scholarship has rejected interventionist liberal peacebuilding in favour of grass-roots programmes that privilege 'local ownership' over the institutional preferences of Western donors.[65] Even advocates of liberal peacebuilding have come to view the Western interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan as aberrations, urging that the proverbial baby should not be thrown out with the bathwater,[66] or that a less technocratic and more 'problem-driven approach to SSR' should be found.[67]

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[60] Richard Caplan (ed.), *Exit Strategies and State Building* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012); David M. Edelstein, 'Foreign Militaries, Sustainable Institutions, and Postwar Statebuilding', in Roland Paris & Timothy D. Sisk (eds.) *The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Postwar Peace Operations* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2009), pp. 81-103.
[61] Clare Short, 'A Humanitarian Surge and its Demise, 1997 to 2003: A Personal Account', *Peacebuilding*, 1:1 (2013), pp. 33-7.
[62] Edward Newman, 'Peacebuilding as Security in "Failing" and Conflict-Prone States', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 4:3 (2010), pp. 305-22.
[63] Augustine S. J. Park, 'Peacebuilding, the Rule of Law and the Problem of Culture: Assimilation, Multiculturalism, Deployment', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 4:4 (2010), pp. 413-32.
[64] Robert Egnell & Peter Haldén, 'Laudable, Ahistorical and Overambitious: Security Sector Reform Meets State Formation Theory', *Conflict, Security & Development*, 9:1 (2009), pp. 27-54.
[65] David Roberts, 'Everyday Legitimacy and Postconflict States: Introduction', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 7:1 (2013), pp. 1-10; Jens Meierhenrich, 'Forming States After Failure', in Rotberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-169; Ariel I. Ahram, 'Learning to Live with Militias: Toward a Critical Policy on State Frailty', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 5:2 (2011), pp. 175-92.
[66] Roland Paris, 'Saving Liberal Peacebuilding', *Review of International Studies*, 36:2, (2010), pp. 337-65; Nicolas Lemay-Hébert, 'Statebuilding Without Nation-building? Legitimacy, State Failure and the Limits of the Institutionalist Approach', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 3:1 (2009), pp. 21-45; Kimberly Marten, 'Statebuilding and Force: The Proper Role of Foreign Militaries', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 1:2 (2007), pp. 237-8; Paris & Sisk, *op. cit.*
[67] Edmunds, o*p. cit.*; Sedra, o*p. cit.*

After Iraq and Afghanistan, Western states have increasingly eschewed large-scale interventionism. In 2011, the British Government released its 'Building Stability Overseas Strategy' (BSOS), which envisaged a light-footprint approach to 'upstream capacity building'. BSOS emphasised the promotion of stable, preferably democratic governance abroad, by providing limited support to allies before state failure and so precluding the need for expensive and difficult reconstruction efforts 'downstream'.[68] In principle, BSOS did not abandon the goals of liberal peacebuilding so much as revise the ways and means through which they might be achieved. Its military sub-component, however, the 'International Defence Engagement Strategy' (IDES), represented a fundamentally different approach to overseas defence reform.[69] In practice, IDES and BSOS have heralded a return to the defence diplomacy and proxy capacity building seen during the Cold War. British MCB in Libya has been conducted by Special Forces, acting to strengthen one side or another in Libya's civil war.[70] In Iraqi Kurdistan and Syria, as in the Ukraine, British efforts have similarly followed a "train and equip" paradigm based around the deployment of Short Term Training Teams (STTTs) to teach basic tactical skills.[71] Indeed, efforts to train the Kurdish Peshmerga seem at odds with the British policy of ensuring an intact Iraqi state, and have led to sustained concern about the risks of sponsoring proxy militias.[72] Consequently, this recent reversion to tactical MCB over more profound political and institutional forms of engagement has been criticised by scholars as little more than a mechanism for

[68] British Government, 'Building Stability Overseas Strategy' (London, 2011), online at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67475/Building-stability-overseas-strategy.pdf accessed 10/03/14.
[69] British Government, 'International Defence Engagement Strategy' (London, 2013), online at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/73171/defence_engagement_strategy.pdf, accessed 27/06/16.
[70] Ruth Sherlock, 'British "Advisers" Deployed to Libya to Build Anti-Isil Cells', *The Telegraph*, 27 February 2016, online at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/12176114/British-advisers-deployed-to-Libya-to-build-anti-Isil-cells.html, accessed on 27/06/16.
[71] 'UK Troops Training Kurdish Forces in Iraq, Says MoD', *BBC News*, 12 October 2014, online at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-29586437, accessed 27/06/16; Ben Farmer, 'British Troops Learn what it's like to Face Russian Forces as they Train Ukrainians', *The Telegraph*, 13 August 2015, online at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/ukraine/11799236/British-troops-learn-what-its-like-to-face-Russian-forces-as-they-train-Ukrainians.html, accessed on 27/06/16.
[72] Geraint Alun Hughes, 'Syria and the Perils of Proxy Warfare', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 25:3 (2014), pp. 522-538; Robert Johnson, 'Upstream Engagement and Downstream Entanglements: The Assumptions, Opportunities, and Threats of Partnering', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 25:3 (2014), pp. 647-668; Sibylle Scheipers, 'Auxiliaries at War in the Middle East', *Survival*, 57:4 (2015), pp. 121-138.

intervention on the cheap; an absence of true strategy rather than a strategy in itself.[73] As Grissom argued, the West has 'abandoned the comprehensive state-building project in Afghanistan without replacing it with a coherent alternative.'[74] Given the continuing policy interest in the West in developing foreign military forces, and the lack of clarity in theory and in policy, the potential insights offered by the relatively successful reform of the RSLAF by IMATT require re-examination.

This thesis examines the process of externally-led military change in the RSLAF, and proceeds as following. The study's research design and methodology is presented In Chapter 2. Chapter 3 then examines the existing scholarship on Western military change, alongside the concepts that underpin SSR, informing the thesis' theoretical perspectives. In Chapter 4, Sierra Leonean civil-military relations prior to British intervention are examined, establishing the character of the Sierra Leonean neo-patrimonial state and its impact on state and military collapse in Sierra Leone. Chapter 5 then turns to the politics behind British intervention in Sierra Leone, and its impact on later British policy approaches to defence reform there. Together, these two chapters chart the local and international context in which military change in Sierra Leone occurred, and their influences on British interventions into the RSLAF.

The next three chapters then explore the different phases of British-led military change in Sierra Leone, examining the impact of successive IMATT approaches on the RSLAF. Chapter 6 focuses on the relative impact of bottom-up adaptation and top-down reform on the Sierra Leonean military during the British stabilisation campaign. Chapter 7 goes on to trace the process of RSLAF institutional development IMATT embarked upon after the war, under the auspices of "Plan 2010". Here, IMATT attempted to harness bottom-up, generational change in the RSLAF, but was only able to pursue this agenda owing to high-level political support for top-down institutional transformation. In Chapter 8, the fate of this generational model is assessed, as IMATT withdrew and the RSLAF embarked upon its own peacekeeping deployments abroad. In Chapter 9, the thesis concludes that the RSLAF did witness some sustained

[73] Matthew Ford, 'Influence Without Power? Reframing British Concepts of Military Intervention after 10 years of Counterinsurgency', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 25:3 (2014), pp. 495-500; Patrick Porter, 'Goodbye to All That: On Small Wars and Big Choices', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 25:3 (2014), pp. 685-95.
[74] Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars', *op. cit.*, p. 282.

normative change, improving both its military effectiveness and democratic accountability. This was primarily achieved by manipulating the career incentives of junior and middle-ranking RSLAF officers, largely through IMATT's control of the RSLAF's internal processes of socialisation, promotion, and professional military education, and by exploiting inter-generational tensions in the RSLAF. Inevitably, this process proved both highly contested and deeply political. Far from impeding internal adaptation, external military intervention was essential to stimulate change in the RSLAF's military culture – but ultimately, cultural changes in the RSLAF were the product of *institutional* reform.

2. Methodology

This thesis aims to understand the process of externally-led military change in the RSLAF, and the implications of this process for the development of democratic civil-military relations during international interventions. This chapter outlines how this study has sought to address this question, explaining in detail the methodology used. It proceeds in four sections. First, the study's research design is explained. Second, the chapter outlines the data collection processes undertaken. In the third section, the ethical implications of the research process are discussed. The last section details the data analysis methods used to draw conclusions from the data collected.

Research Design

In order to address the core questions posed in this thesis, the project has adopted a qualitative research methodology using a case study design. The central research questions – how and why externally-led military change occurs – necessitate an in-depth analysis of the interactions between host and donor nation, and the impact of this interaction in context. As such, a qualitative rather than quantitative approach to research has been adopted in an attempt to 'unravel the chronological flow and see which events led to which consequences and derive fruitful explanations'.[1] While a body of theoretical literature on military change exists,[2] and several empirical studies of SSR have been conducted,[3] relatively little *theoretical* attention has been paid to normative defence reform components of either MCB or SSR. As such, the study's approach is partially exploratory; aiming to better understand the process of externally-driven military change in relation to established theories of military change in a single national context. Some quantitative approaches to the study

[1] Sebastiaan Rietjens, 'Qualitative Data Analysis: Seeing Patterns in the Fog of Civil-Military Interactions', in Joesph Soeters, Patricia M. Shields & Sebastiaan Rietjens (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in Military Studies* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2014), p. 130.
[2] See for example, Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1984); Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1991); Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1997); Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga & James A. Russell (eds.), *Military Adaptation in Afghanistan* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2013).
[3] Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007* (Birmingham, GFN-SSR, 2009); Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone 1997-2013: Defence, Diplomacy and Development in Action* (London, Routledge, 2014).

of military organisations do exist. Questionnaires have been used to collect participants' self-reported perceptions of military cohesion, and scholars have made use of statistical data to examine correlations between macro-level variables when studying military integration and power-sharing.[4] However, such models are best suited to testing already-developed concepts rather than exploring new themes. Quantitative approaches typically only provide a snap-shot of the relationship between variables at a given point in time, or at best allow comparison between successive snap-shots over time, rather than permitting a detailed insight into how the process of change actually occurs.

In recent years, this qualitative approach has challenged the previous methodological dominance of positivism, which privileged experimental methods as the sole claim to knowledge on causation. Maxwell has highlighted how this ontological position has shifted as a result of the development of methodologies like process tracing, which view causal processes as observable, and seeks to unpack the "black box" explanations of the experimental approach. Scholars adopting such approaches view causation as an inherently contextual process which is not amenable to being reduced into "extraneous variables".[5] As Miles and Huberman have argued, qualitative research 'is far better than solely quantified approaches at developing explanations of what we call *local causality* – the actual events and processes that led to specific outcomes'.[6]

In order to facilitate an in-depth analysis of the issues in question, this study has adopted a case study design, focusing on the reform of the RSLAF by IMATT. In-depth case study research is particularly well suited to exploring complex processes, in which the relationships between variables are unknown and opaque, or profoundly interconnected and difficult to unpick except in context. As Green has highlighted, case study research is typically 'concerned with pinning down the specific mechanisms and pathways between causes and

[4] Guy L. Siebold & Dennis R. Kelly, 'Development of the Platoon Cohesion Index', US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (October 1988); J. Griffith, 'Measurement of Group Cohesion in U.S Army Units', *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 9:2 (1988), pp. 158-161; Caroline Hartzell & Matthew Hoddie, 'Institutionalizing Peace: Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Conflict Management', *American Journal of Political Science*, 47:2 (2003), pp. 318–332; Katherine Glassmyer & Nicholas Sambanis, 'Rebel-Military Integration and Civil War Termination', *Journal of Peace Research*, 45:3 (2008), pp. 365-84.
[5] Joseph A. Maxwell, 'Using Qualitative Methods for Causal Explanation', *Field Methods*, 16:3 (2004), pp. 246-9.
[6] Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 245, emphasis in the original.

effects rather than revealing the average strength of a factor that causes an effect'.[7] Initially, it was hoped to conduct research on two similar case studies exhibiting somewhat different outcomes: firstly, the reform of the RSLAF by IMATT, and secondly the reform of the ANA by ISAF. Process tracing was to be used for in-case analysis, before conducting cross-case comparisons. This comparative methodology is a particularly potent means of improving the generalisability of case study findings.[8]

However, it became rapidly apparent during the early stages of research that the level of detail required to properly examine the processes in question rendered a comparative approach impractical due to the time and resource intensive nature of in-depth research, and so only the Sierra Leone case study was selected. Because this thesis primarily aims to understand the process of externally-led change and the implications of various factors in context, a single case study design was adopted in order to privilege depth of analysis over cross-case comparison. While findings based on IMATT's experiences of RSLAF reform may not be generalisable to every instance of externally-led military change, they can still inform the development of theory, and in this way have wider implications via generalisable theory. As Yin argued, 'case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes'.[9] In other words, the intent was to produce '*analytic generalization*… corroborating, modifying, rejecting, or otherwise advancing theoretical concepts' outlined in the extant literature on military change and civil-military relations;[10] specifically, to advance understanding of the process of successful extraneous military change.

To a significant extent, the utility of a single case study for analytic generalisation and theory development is dependent on the selection of the case study itself. Here, the selection of the reform of the RSLAF by IMATT was informed by a number of factors. Firstly, previous empirical studies of democratic civil-military relations in Sierra Leone have observed some change

[7] Joachim K. Blatter, 'Case Study', in Lisa M. Given (ed.), *The Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods, Volumes 1 & 2* (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 2008), p. 69.
[8] See Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 2014).
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 41.

in the RSLAF's behaviour since British military intervention.[11] The case, therefore, provides an opportunity to examine the impact of external intervention on local military behaviour in an example where a degree of change has successfully occurred. Indeed, the relative success seen in Sierra Leone in comparison to Iraq and Afghanistan makes the case a notable outlier, increasing the potential to develop conceptual understanding through comparison with theories already developed in less successful cases, such as that presented in Grissom's study of the ANA.[12] Moreover, Sierra Leone may be as close to an "ideal type" for post-conflict SSR as is realistically possible, owing to its small population and relative willingness to reform.[13] Thus, understanding how and why those changes that have been seen in Sierra Leone occurred is of vital importance not just to theory, but also to policy. This "most likely" test is effectively the reverse of what Green describes as 'the "Sinatra inference": If a theory can make it here, it can make it everywhere'.[14] Hence, if externally-led civil-military change cannot make it in post-conflict Sierra Leone, it probably can't make it any other similar post-conflict environments.

Secondly, the fact that civil-military change in Sierra Leone – while significant – was still somewhat limited, makes the case of RSLAF reform particularly valuable for analytic generalisation. It provides the opportunity to examine not only factors that caused change, but factors which impeded it within the same case. Albrecht and Jackson have contended that change in the RSLAF was partial and potentially unsustainable because it was primarily reliant on IMATT's presence.[15] The fact that both the RSLAF's behaviour and the nature of IMATT's interaction with the RSLAF changed over time reinforces the need for a qualitative approach. It also permits comparison of differing relationships between external and host militaries within the same case, improving the analytic generalisability of conclusions through this comparison. Finally, IMATT's interactions with the RSLAF are practically viable to study owing to a number of factors. Both IMATT and the RSLAF were relatively small-

[11] See Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*
[12] Adam Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars: NATO Advisors and Military Adaptation in the Afghan National Army, 2001-2011', in Farrell, Osinga & Russell, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-87.
[13] See for example, the British Army's lessons learnt analysis of British intervention. British Army, 'Sierra Leone Case Study: The British Army's Contribution 1997 – 2015', Warfare Branch (Warminster, February 2016).
[14] Blatter, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
[15] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*

scale military organisations, making detailed understanding of processes more viable here than in larger cases, like intervention in Iraq or Afghanistan. The fact that SSR in Sierra Leone – and IMATT in specific – were dominated by the UK also simplifies the process of research and analysis, and precludes the need to unpick large numbers of different national perspectives and approaches, as would be required in a case of military change initiated by an intervening coalition. The fact that English is the official language of both the intervening military and the recipient armed forces also makes Sierra Leone practical as an in-depth case study. The primary focus of research was limited to the period of British military intervention and subsequent reform under IMATT, from 2000 to 2013. However, the study has also made use of wider British experiences of change in Sierra Leone in the period preceding intervention (1998-2000), and following the establishment of ISAT, as well as Sierra Leone's wider political and military history. It was decided to cap the study at 2015, as researching ongoing events in sufficient detail to draw any firm conclusions would have been impractical.

Data Collection

Data collection was informed by the need to ensure detailed coverage of the themes identified as potentially important by extant theory, and the chronological span of the period of reform. Practically, the methods used to collect data were designed to ensure the reliability of later analysis in so far as possible. These aims were supported by the collection of data from multiple different types of source. Here, research was divided across two broad categories of evidence: primary sources and secondary data. Secondary sources are those created either after events took place or by individuals not directly involved. Types of secondary sources used in this thesis include published academic analyses and policy-focused studies written after events took place,[16] and NGO reports, which while frequently compiled at the time mediate first-hand accounts with their own assessments.[17] Secondary sources utilised by the project also include participants' own published accounts and

[16] For example, David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (Oxford, James Currey, 2005).

[17] Such as the International Crisis Group's periodic reports, for instance. See, for an example, International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: A New Era of Reform?', Africa report No. 143 (Dakar/Brussels, 31 July 2008).

memoirs; both those presented by the participants' themselves,[18] and those collected by intermediaries.[19] Some official publications should also be considered as secondary sources depending on their application. The British Army's own lessons learnt briefing note on its role in Sierra Leone is a secondary source for factual information, but a primary source for the British Army's enduring view of its operations there.[20] Primary sources are defined as material created at the time by those directly involved in the processes under study, or their later unpublished accounts. An equally expansive range of different types of primary data sources have been used. These include published official documents and unpublished internal papers,[21] interviews, and archival material. The latter was mainly sourced from the Imperial War Museum's archives, in the form of British Army Camera Crew reels and later oral history interviews conducted by the museum.[22]

Methodological discussions on conducting research related to military subjects frequently note the difficulty of gaining access to material as a significant constraint.[23] Access is typically restricted due to security considerations or institutional prohibitions concerned with reputational harm.[24] In this study, the bulk of both primary and secondary material used came from "open source" resources, accessed either through literature reviews or online searches. Both the British and Sierra Leonean governments provide access to core doctrinal and policy documents via their online web portals, although the range of Sierra Leonean government material available online is limited.[25] Here, the Sierra Leonean online archiving website, Sierra Leone Web, proved

[18] See for example, General David Richards, *Taking Command* (London, Headline, 2014).
[19] See Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson (eds.), *Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone 1997 - 2007: Views from the Front Line* (Berlin, Lit, 2010).
[20] British Army, 'Sierra Leone Case Study', *op. cit.*
[21] The former includes doctrine, such as British Ministry of Defence, 'Joint Doctrine Publication 3-40 Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution', Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (Shrivenham, November 2009), and policy papers, like Government of Sierra Leone, 'Defence White Paper: Informing the People' (Freetown, 2003). It also includes the periodic consultant-led audits and reviews commissioned by DFID. An example of the latter used prolifically in the thesis is Colonel Dent's IMATT briefing document, Colonel Mike Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief 2002', IMATT internal briefing document (Shrewsbury, 24 July 2002).
[22] Online at http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections, accessed on 26/08/16.
[23] Eyal Ben-Ari & Yagil Levy, 'Getting Access to the Field: Insider/Outsider Perspectives', in Soeters, Shields & Rietjens, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-18.
[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13; Brenda L. Moore, 'In-Depth Interviewing', in Soeters, Shields & Rietjens, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-7.
[25] See https://www.gov.uk/ and http://www.mod.gov.sl/, accessed on 26/08/16.

invaluable.[26] The Imperial War Museum's collections are open to researchers by appointment, and the material held by the museum's archives has been cleared for release. However, much of the audio and visual material is yet to be digitised, and so was not available for research purposes owing to the fragility of the original media. Limited access to the British Ministry of Defence archives was obtained, but the current level of security classification on this material precluded its use in this project. Consequently, internal IMATT documents were largely inaccessible, save for personal notes and presentations provided by participants.

In consequence, the major source of primary data used in this thesis came from interviews conducted with participants who had been directly involved in the processes under examination. When Sierra Leone was selected as the main case study, it was expected that significant interviewing in-country with Sierra Leonean representatives would be possible. However, the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease in West Africa, which spread to Sierra Leone in May 2014 and reached pandemic proportions, rendered this expectation void. Restrictions on travel to and within the country made research in Sierra Leone impractical, while the University of Exeter concluded that the risks to academic researchers in Sierra Leone precluded travel. Moreover, as the government and military of Sierra Leone were entirely absorbed in dealing with the crisis, which did not abate until after the study's allotted period of field research had ended, interviewing in-country would likely have been impossible anyway. Interviews were nonetheless conducted in the UK with participants from two different constituent cohorts: serving or retired British military personnel who had served in Sierra Leone; and British Government civilians who had deployed to Sierra Leone. The bulk of interviews in these cohorts constituted "elite interviews"; interviews with participants occupying a position of privileged access or influence, or with specific claims to professional knowledge or experience. Such interviews offer a particularly powerful means of gaining insight into otherwise inaccessible communities or processes.[27]

[26] See 'Sierra Leone Web', online at http://www.sierra-leone.org/, accessed on 26/08/16.
[27] Glenn Beamer, 'Elite Interviews and State Politics Research', *State Politics & Policy Quarterly*, 2:1 (2002), pp. 86-96.

As the study aims to produce conclusions generalisable to theory, interviews directly conducted during the research process were intended to cover the military changes under examination, rather than to produce a statistically sound sample size in comparison to a potential population. Most participants were purposively selected on the basis of their known position or role, using secondary sources or their advertised career history on the professional networking website LinkedIn. Initially, it was intended to recruit further participants via snowballing; that is, by using existing participants to identify further potential participants whose relevance or accessibility may otherwise have been opaque. Interviewing was conducted until conceptual "saturation", rather than against a fixed target number. Saturation was defined as the point at which interviews had covered the date range in question, and no new themes emerged from further interviews – i.e. the point at which further interviewing ceased to provide any pertinent new insights. In a snowballing technique, saturation can be additionally defined by 'a convergence of recommendations' for further inquiries – especially among smaller cohorts like senior army officers.[28] Previous studies have shown that when conducting qualitative interviews, saturation tends to occur between 20 and 30 interview participants. Moreover, data analysis from substantially larger numbers of in-depth interviews can become unwieldy.[29] In the event, however, the overwhelming majority of interview participants were identified purposively, owing to the difficulty in locating participants through snowballing, the fact that a number of participants recommended through snowballing had already been purposively identified, and the fact that saturation was attained without the need for significant numbers of additional snowballed participants.

A semi-structured interview methodology was adopted in all interviews conducted as part of this study. In a semi-structured interview, the participant is asked open-ended questions as a prompt for comment or discussion. In this study, these were drawn from a standardised list which acted as a handrail for discussion, and tailored to the participants' background. However, participants

[28] Beamer, *op. cit.*, p. 91.
[29] Greg Guest, Arwen Bunce & Laura Johnson, 'How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability', *Field Methods*, 18:1 (2006), pp. 59-82; Mark Mason, 'Sample Size and Saturation in PhD Studies Using Qualitative Interviews', *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung*, 11:3 (2010), online at http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1428/3027, accessed on 26/08/16.

were otherwise free to shape discussion around their own experiences, with the interviewer asking contextual follow-up questions to explore details as required. This method differs from more structured interview techniques, which typically resemble a verbal questionnaire, and unstructured techniques used in oral history, in which the interview is characterised either by informal conversation or by the participant's own narrative.[30] Accordingly, a semi-structured interview format is well-suited to conducting in-depth interviews in which explanation or participants' subjective assessments are sought.[31] As Beamer highlighted, semi-structured interviews are a particularly potent 'tool to tap into political constructs that may otherwise be difficult to examine…involving the beliefs of political actors',[32] but, in Fetterman's words, are most useful when 'the fieldworker comprehends the fundamentals of a community from the insider's perspective'.[33] Interviews varied in length from around 45 minutes to several hours, depending on the wishes of the participant. Most interviews lasted around an hour in duration. All but one participant interview was recoded using a digital audio recorder, and subsequently transcribed; an interview summary was prepared based on field notes taken during the unrecorded interview.

Participants were recruited according to the following procedures. Potential participants were identified on the basis of their position or role held, either through use of secondary literature, snowballing, or via their advertised career history on the online networking site LinkedIn. Participants were approached electronically with a brief outline of the project, and where appropriate, an attached *Call for Research Participants* sheet. This document provided potential participants with a brief introduction to the study's aims and the nature of participation. Interested potential participants were then supplied with the *Participant Information Sheet*, and an interview was subsequently arranged after potential participants had had the opportunity to reflect on this. Interviews were conducted in a variety of locations, including participant's offices, social clubs, homes, and at the University of Exeter, according to the participant's preference. Accordingly, participation was entirely voluntary, and so although potential participants were identified either directly or by

[30] Lioness Ayres, 'Semi-Structured Interview', in Given, *op. cit.*, pp. 810-11.
[31] Moore, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-8, pp. 123-4.
[32] Beamer, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-7.
[33] David M. Fetterman, 'Ethnography', in Given, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

snowballing, interviewees effectively self-selected for participation by electing to respond to a request for interview. In this fashion, the recruitment process itself shaped the nature of the eventual interviewee cohort, but necessarily so, in order to conform to ethical best practice in academic interviewing.

In total, 25 participants were formally interviewed as part of this study, alongside a number of informal "audit" interviews. 22 interviews were carried out with British military personnel from all three services (eight still serving in some capacity, 14 retired). The remaining three interviews were conducted with British civilian participants from various civil service backgrounds; a police adviser, a member of DFID, and a Stabilisation Unit civilian expert. The study had originally aimed to conduct around 40 participant interviews. It was expected that around 24 interviews (60 per cent) with British military personnel would be sufficient to reach saturation, with the remaining interviews to be split between RSLAF personnel, British and Sierra Leonean civilian civil servants, and representatives from NGOs or IOs; sufficient to establish official or consensus positions. However, the inaccessibility of Sierra Leone during research meant that other sources of primary data on Sierra Leonean experiences had to be found.

Here, extensive use of second-hand interview data originally collected by the Innovations for Successful Societies (ISS) project has been made. The ISS project was established by Princeton University in 2008, and aims to chronicle experiences of governmental change in developing states, including Sierra Leone. The project makes the transcripts and audio files of interviews conducted by its researchers freely available online for wider scholarly use, classified thematically and by country of focus.[34] ISS interviews provided a significant insight into otherwise inaccessible groups, and are particularly useful, as they were largely conducted shortly after the events they discuss. In total, 26 interviews from the ISS project were used: six with deployed UK Government civilians; 14 with IO, NGO or Sierra Leonean National Electoral Commission representatives; and six with Sierra Leonean police or civil servants. These included two transcripts from the same participant on different subjects, and one ISS participant (Keith Biddle) was interviewed additionally as part of this study.

[34] See the Innovations for Successful Societies website and digital archive, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/, accessed on 26/08/16.

In total, therefore, 51 participant interview transcripts were analysed from 49 different participants, with a further three taped interviews coming from the Imperial War Museum archives. The difficulty in accessing RSLAF participants was addressed through the use of published RSLAF views, the extensive quotations from RSLAF members published in Albrecht and Jackson's various narratives, and the availability of RSLAF policy documents.[35] In general, however, the focus on IMATT perspectives and activity reflects the core research question the thesis seeks to address; namely, how external interventionists build other people's armies.

Ethical Considerations

The use of interviews as a means of data collection raises questions of ethical conduct in field research with human participants, first codified in the Nuremburg Code and later in the Declaration of Helsinki. The project's field research was governed by two separate ethical oversight bodies. Interviews with serving British military personnel and MOD civil servants were conducted under the auspices of the Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committee (MODREC), which in effect provides both ethical oversight and an approval process for institutional access to participants. Without MODREC clearance, both researchers and MOD/military personnel are banned from carrying out or participating in research.[36] Retired military personnel and all other participants were interviewed under the purview of the University of Exeter School of Social Sciences and International Studies Research Ethics Committee (SSISREC). MODREC approval was sought under the protocol number 570/MODREC/14, and required prior approval from the Army Scientific Advisory Committee. This two stage process proved to be significantly time-consuming, and necessitated the support of an institutional sponsor for the project, in the initial form of SO1 Concept Development in the Force Development cell of the Capability directorate at Army HQ.

This dual process of ethical approval resulted in a significant delay to components of the field research. While approval to conduct non-MOD

[35] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*; Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*

[36] See 'Ministry of Defence Research Ethics Committees', online at https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/ministry-of-defence-research-ethics-committees, accessed on 26/08/16.

interviews was received in July 2014, approval from MODREC was not forthcoming until May 2015. Nonetheless, it was vital to ensure ethical best practice was adhered to throughout the research process, both to gain access to cohorts and to ensure the study would not cause any harm to participants. The main risks to participants posed by the study are professional and reputational. If participants' unfavourable views of colleagues or official policy later became publically known as a result of this research, it might cause reputational, social or professional and career-related damage to participants. Additionally, it was acknowledged that a small number of interviews were related to experiences surrounding active military operations, the recollection of which might prove potentially distressing for participants. Procedures were put in place to terminate interviews and refer distressed participants to appropriate sources of assistance. In reality, this concern proved unfounded. The potential for reputational and professional harm was largely mitigated through provisions for confidentiality of participants during research, and their anonymity in written outputs and publication, as well as effective data handling and storage processes.

Participant welfare and confidentiality were safeguarded in a number of ways. Interview participation was entirely voluntary, and only conducted after obtaining the participants informed consent. All participants retained the option to confidentially withdraw from the study at any stage, without having to give a cause. Participant recruitment and selection methods were specifically designed to ensure potential participants' confidentiality, and to prevent any undue influence or coercion over participants that could impede their ability to freely decide whether to participate. Interview participants were approached individually via email or private message on LinkedIn. Participants who declined to participate or did not respond to the initial invitation were not pursued further. Potential participants' recommended during snowballing were contacted directly by the interviewer, rather than by other participants, in order to maintain confidentiality and preclude any undue influence or coercion. Some participants did, however, elect to circulate the *Call for Research Participants*, which invited potential participants to contact the interviewer directly. Participants were supplied the *Project Information Sheet* in advance, and were invited to ask any questions they had about the project prior to arranging an interview, and again

in person before the interview commenced. All interviews were preceded by a general preamble discussion, during which the conditions of the interview were agreed. All participants were invited to sign a consent form prior to the commencement of the interview, thus providing their voluntary consent to participate in writing. Participants also had the option to decline to be audio recorded.

Procedures relating to anonymity and post-interview processes differed between MODREC and SSISREC participants. Under the provisions of MODREC, all MOD and military participants were required to be anonymised in all outputs, regardless of the wishes of the individual participant. Interviews held under SSISREC were conducted under the presumption of participant anonymity, but some participants were afforded the option of waiving anonymity if they so wished. All “non-elite” participants (including military personnel up to and including the rank of major) were anonymous by default, and were not offered the option of speaking on-the-record. “Elite” interview participants interviewed under SSISREC provisions (military officers of the rank of lieutenant colonel and above) were offered anonymity, but had the option of speaking on the record if they wished to. This was justified on the basis that such individuals, by virtue of their position, had sufficient experience, training and awareness to speak publically without undue personal or reputational risk. Moreover, the titular nature of their positions would make them difficult to reasonably anonymise, and on-the-record interviews were only conducted at the participants’ own choosing. Anonymous participants have been referred to by a generalised form of role, rank or position within the text, and by a randomised participant number in citation. On-the-record participants were referred to by name, both in text and in citation.

Under SSISREC guidelines, participants were offered the option of reviewing and commenting on their interview transcript and requesting amendments in discussion with the interviewer. In practice, most participants requested a copy of their transcript but very few amendments of any substance were made. However, a number of participants who had spoken on-the-record requested that sections of their transcript be treated anonymously. In these instances, quotation or citation from anonymised sections of the transcript were referred to according to generalised job descriptors and participant numbers. In

order to maintain anonymity, both the participants' named interviews and their anonymised sobriquets have been included in the bibliography. This prevents their identification by omission, but also artificially inflates the total number of participants listed in the bibliography. MODREC participants were not permitted to review or comment on their interview transcripts. All transcription was conducted by the interviewer to prevent disclosure of data to third parties. During the process of transcription, anonymous participants' interviews were transcribed without key identifying details (like names) in order to produce an anonymised transcript, and preclude inadvertent disclosure in later analysis and outputs. All data has been held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, and participants were informed that their data would be destroyed should they decide to withdraw. Otherwise, data will be retained for three years beyond the end of the project to enable publication. Participants' transcripts will not be published as transcripts, in whole or part, except through quotation in this thesis or other published outputs. During the process of transcription, interview speech was largely retained it its original "colloquial" spoken form. This retained a degree of nuance in the transcripts which proved useful in later analysis. However, grammar and syntax have been "cleaned" into a more standardised written style when directly quoted in this thesis, at participants' request.

The project was funded by the University of Exeter and Babcock International Ltd, via a competitive academic scholarship. In this fashion, the University of Exeter funded academic costs, while Babcock International provided a maintenance stipend. However, both sources of funding were awarded by University of Exeter in a competitive academic selection process, and were not contingent on the specificities of the project. Thus, despite providing an academic scholarship to fund the project, Babcock had no influence over the direction or substance of the research, which was in no way contingent on industry approval. Babcock will, however, receive a copy of the project's conclusions, in common with the Ministry of Defence, which maintains this as a condition of ethical approval. Moreover, the project must in due course make conclusions available to the wider service community, via an accessible professional publication.

Data Analysis

Qualitative approaches to research are characterised by a greater divergence of analytical methods used to interpret evidence than seen in quantitative research. To a significant extent, this reflects a lack of consensus in the academy as to the position of the researcher in the collation and analysis of qualititative material. One school of thought takes the view that like quantitative data, qualitative material must be deliberately handled to ensure reliability in analysis; that is, to ensure that other researchers, using the same method and material in a similarly objective fashion would come to the same conclusions. The opposing school of thought contends that the researcher's biases, assumptions and world-view cannot be fully separated from the collection of material, or its analysis. Thus, research is an inherently subjective process (even in quantitative studies using experimental methods, though to a lesser degree) and so can never be objectively replicated. However, this view argues that it is this very subjectivity in research which brings contextual meaning to analysis – something fundamental to qualitative research. Hence, researchers should simply approach their research in a "reflexive" fashion; openly acknowledging their subjective biases and attempting to understand their implications on analysis and conclusions.[37] While acknowledging the inherently subjective nature of the human research process implicit to qualitative interview-based research, this study has nonetheless strived to ensure rigour in analysis in an attempt to manage and mitigate confirmation bias and ensure the veracity of information.

Process tracing was used as a methodological vehicle for analysis. At its core, this approach seeks to identify the process through which independent variables effect dependent outcomes by following a causal chain or mechanism from start to end. As Vennesson and Wiesner explained, using process tracing a 'researcher can assess not merely the presence or absence of an antecedent but the logic of the association between antecedents and outcomes'.[38] However, this approach need not be purely inductive, leading to narrative tendencies, and this study has adopted a more deductive approach to

[37] Maura Dowling, 'Reflexivity', in Given, *op. cit.*, pp. 747-8; Peter Miller, 'Reliability', in Given, *op. cit.*, pp. 753-4; Maxwell, *op. cit.*; Reitjens, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-1.
[38] Pascal Vennesson & Ina Wiesner, 'Process Tracing in Case Studies', in Soeters, Shields & Rietjens, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

identifying causal processes and relationships. Thus, process tracing becomes less concerned with identifying every single interaction within a causal process, but about understanding key elements in relation to the determining features of extant theories. Consequently, this thesis examines the reforms IMATT sought to implement in the RSLAF and the quality of the interaction between IMATT and the RSLAF over time, in comparison to the RSLAF's demonstrable civil-military behaviours, such as performance on active operations and conduct during successive electoral cycles. Used in this way, process tracing becomes 'a valuable analytical tool for researchers interested in analysing the specifics of one case (or a small number of cases), in finding generalizable patterns and making theoretical arguments.'[39] Thus, the project has made extensive use of descriptive context, explanation building, and critical analysis of rival explanations to support what Yin calls *internal validity*; the extent to which causal relationships within the case study can be isolated.[40] Here, process tracing is also of particular utility, as it 'provides an opportunity to pay careful attention to "non-events" or "negative cases", the process or outcome that did not materialize but could have'[41]

Analysis was informed by the recognition that each type of source has unique strengths and weaknesses, derived from the manner and origin of their production. These affect the utility of a source's evidence; both in the application to which a certain source may reliably be used, and the relative weighting or emphasis which can reasonably be put on certain source types in certain applications. For example, this thesis has made use of a number of political and military memoirs, such as General David Richards' *Taking Command* and President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah's *Coming Back from the Brink in Sierra Leone*.[42] Military memoirs in particular pose certain pitfalls for analysis, just as they can provide some unique insights. As King highlighted in his use of military memoirs to analyse the organisation and tactics of the SAS, these sources can be particularly prone to hyperbole or misrepresentation to improve reputation. Nonetheless, King found that such self-aggrandisement is relatively easily identified in the text, particularly through the use of cross-referencing,

[39] Vennesson & Wiesner, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
[40] Yin, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-51.
[41] Vennesson & Wiesner, *op. cit.*, p. 101.
[42] Richards, *op. cit.*; Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, *Coming Back From the Brink in Sierra Leone: A Memoir* (Accra, EPP Books, 2010).

such that military memoirs 'must be treated with care, but they should not be dismissed per se as evidence.'[43] At the same time, the production of military memoirs is typically subject to layers of censorship. As Jenkings and Woodward chronicled, military memoirs are shaped by the self-censorship of their authors, who are often sensitive to the reputations and emotions of their former colleagues and their wider family members even when they are less concerned about their own reputation. Equally, their publication is mediated by the commercial interests of publishers and the demands of genre. Many are also actively censored by the author's former employers in the form of the MOD, which can use security prerogatives to censor material for a variety of reasons; something which also shapes author's self-censorship. Yet as Jenkings and Woodward conclude, these 'books make a claim to truth, about the veracity of the lived experience of war', and their authority in so doing remains potent providing scholars analyse their content in a nuanced fashion, sensitive to their method of production.[44]

Similar critiques might be made of other published accounts and analyses that are intended to articulate a particular perspective or advocate a policy position, such as internal or open-source policy reviews, and NGO reports. Such documents provide a vital insight into potentially inaccessible sites, and provide a wealth of information, but must be treated with circumspection and contextual awareness. Equally, participant interview transcripts must be treated with similar caution, not least because of the dialectic nature of their production. Interviews in which there is a pronounced power imbalance between the interviewer and interviewee are particularly noteworthy here. This study conducted a number of "elite interviews" with senior military officers and civil servants. Not only do such participants hold significant claims to unique professional knowledge (hence why they are being interviewed) relative to the interviewer, they also occupy a relatively elevated position in British society. As Beamer has described, the power differential between interviewer and interviewee in such situations shapes the character of discussions, and can potentially render it difficult for the interviewer to challenge

[43] Anthony King, 'The Special Air Service and the Concentration of Military Power', *Armed Forces & Society*, 5:4 (2009), pp. 648-9.
[44] K. Neil Jenkings & Rachel Woodward, 'Communicating War through the Contemporary British Military Memoir: the Censorships of Genre, State, and Self', *Journal of War & Culture Studies*, 7:1 (2014), pp. 5–17.

or test participant narratives during the interview – even if only through a lack of detailed knowledge.[45] These dynamics persist in non-elite interviews, though to a lesser extent. In general, interviewees may misremember details, seek to protect their own reputations by presenting selective accounts, or misrepresent in order to please the interviewer. Moreover, the recruitment methods used in this study were reliant on interviewees self-selecting to participate. This raises potential issues of selection bias, in that participants with certain views or experiences may have been more likely to volunteer (or decline to volunteer).[46] These concerns necessitated analytical processes to ensure the validity of factual information supplied by interview participants, while recognising underlying opinions and beliefs these interviews offer. It also reinforces the importance of basing analysis on multiple types of source material.

In his discussion of qualitative analysis techniques, Reitjens advanced three broad stages of data analysis through which these dangers can be avoided and evidence marshalled into useful conclusions: data reduction, data display (or conceptualisation), and drawing and verifying conclusions.[47] To ensure rigour during data reduction and conceptualisation, this study has adopted a standardised and evenly-applied coding process to analyse primary material. From this, the process of reform could be traced chronologically through the data, themes and patterns identified, and then compared to extant theory as a vehicle for analysis. Here, analysis was grounded in the critical assessment of sources to ensure the veracity of chronology, interactions, patterns and themes identified. Although Reitjens primarily considered cross-referencing and triangulation as means of verifying findings, these techniques proved equally important in helping to identify patterns and form conclusions. In this fashion, a degree of objectivity and credibility could be established in the tracing of processes and their impact. Analysis was conducted with a reflexive acknowledgement of the research process's subjective nature, and the role of the interviewer in shaping interview data. This thesis has also deliberately sought to identify incongruent data, and to test alternative hypotheses, in order verify its conclusions.

[45] Beamer, *op. cit.*
[46] Moore, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-6.
[47] Reitjens, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-140.

A coding framework was used to underpin cross-referencing and triangulation, as a further means of ensuring rigour during analysis. Coding was primarily adopted to facilitate the analysis of interview transcripts. During this process, sections of interview material were assigned thematic labels, known as "codes", based on their content. This process was conducted using NVivo 10/11 software, which enables coded material to be sorted and compared, facilitating the analysis of information both within and between participants. Initially, codes were developed based on the theoretical issues under scrutiny and the subject matter of the interviews. As further previously unforeseen themes emerged during the process of coding, additional codes were added to this master list. Already coded transcripts were then re-coded according to these additional codes, as required. Each code was assigned a definition to ensure consistency in application, and some codes contained 'nested' sub-codes to facilitate more granular examination of certain themes. In total, 41 codes and sub-codes were used, grouped under seven different headings. Other primary material, such as policy documents, contemporary NGO reports, and interviews conducted by the Innovations for Successful Societies project, were also coded according to the same themes. Once coded, material was compared and contrasted within and between these thematic codes. This helped to develop an understanding of the relationship between different thematic areas, but also permitted examination of the same thematic processes over time, allowing change to be identified.

This coding method also facilitated comparison between sources and source types, known as cross-referencing and triangulation, which were used as the primary means of ensuring rigour during analysis. Cross-referencing refers to the use of comparison between multiple sources in order to test the veracity of information by identifying inconsistencies, alternate perceptions and potential biases within a given set of sources. Cross-referencing is a technique informed by modes of historical research, in which different perspectives are interrogated as if 'witnesses in a trial' in order to construct meaning.[48] Cross-referencing was supported by the use of source triangulation. Akin to the use of intersecting bearings from known reference points to deduce location during navigation, source triangulation uses cross-referencing between multiple different types of source material to improve the veracity of analysis, by

[48] Karen Saucier Lundy, 'Historical Research', in Given, *op. cit.*, p. 396.

offsetting the potential weaknesses of any one source type with the intrinsic strengths of another.[49] This was enabled by a focus on multiple different source types during data collection. Hence, participant interviews were cross-referenced against other participant interviews (including from different participant cohorts) and triangulated against published policy documents, observing NGO's reports, journalistic commentary, etc. – each of which was itself cross-referenced against other sources of the same type wherever possible. Throughout this process, evidence was handled critically in accordance with the type of source that it originated from.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the research methods used to produce this thesis. It has explained the project's research design, in which a qualitative single-case study methodology was adopted. It then detailed the data collection methods used to garner primary and secondary material. These included first-hand interviewing and the use of existing interview transcripts, searches of published and unpublished official papers, collection of archival material, and a review of NGO reports, academic literature and policy-focused analyses. It then discussed the ethical considerations associated with conducting interviews, and the ways in which these shaped data collection and later analysis. Finally, the chapter outlined its approach to analysis, which is grounded in process tracing. Coding, cross-referencing, and triangulation were used alongside pattern matching and alternate hypothesis testing to underpin the validity of analysis and help produce conclusions generalizable to theory. The next chapter will now turn to the existing theoretical literature on military change and SSR, exploring in detail the academic concepts which underpin the methodological approach to analysis that has been adopted, and is explored in the proceeding chapters.

[49] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches, Second Edition* (Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage, 2003), p. 196.

3. Concepts: Changing Armies, Changing Nations

As a tool of liberal intervention, SSR is preoccupied with *normative* military change. This chapter compares scholarly explanations of military change with the concept of exporting "democratic civil-military relations", defined in Western political philosophy by the principle of civilian control of the armed forces. Together, these two bodies of literature form a corpus of theoretical knowledge which underpins SSR as a tool of policy. Hence, this chapter aims to provide an introduction to the theoretical constructs which underpin later analysis of IMATT's reform of the RSLAF. In so doing, it highlights the gaps and contradictions in current scholarship which this thesis seeks to address; notably, the confused relationship between military culture and military change present in the literature, and the limited understanding of how internal and external processes of military change interact. This chapter proceeds in four sections. First, it deconstructs the assumptions inherent in SSR policy, unpicking the character of military change that SSR aims to produce, and examining its' historical development in Western civil-military thinking. The chapter then turns to the causes of military change in Western armed forces, exploring the state of current theory. In the third section, these theories of national military change are examined in relation to empirical scholarship on army building during international interventions. This raises some important questions for our understanding of how military change occurs, with potentially profound implications for the conduct of externally-led military reform programmes, which are discussed in final section.

The Norms of Western Civil-Military Relations

SSR is an inherently normative endeavour. While there is little agreement over the best approach to conducting SSR, or even the vocabulary to be used,[1] SSR is ultimately defined by the normative liberal democratic agenda at its core. For example, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) defines security as 'a core government responsibility, necessary for

[1] Edmunds, Timothy, 'Security Sector Reform', in Thomas C. Bruneau & Florina Cristiana Matei (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2013), p. 50.

economic and social development and vital for the protection of human rights';[2] an understanding that privileges human security as much as state security. Accordingly, the OECD defines SSR as programmes that seek 'to increase the ability of partner countries to meet the range of security needs within their societies in a manner consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of governance and the rule of law'.[3] Conceptually, this policy position reflects the rise of the 'security-development nexus' at the turn of the millennium, in which security and development are understood to be interlinked phenomena.[4] However, SSR as a concept and as a process is under-theorised. Even leading advocates of SSR acknowledge that the extant literature is largely 'prescriptive (and technical) in nature'.[5] Critics, meanwhile, have dismissed these policy guides as dangerously positivist, possessed with a 'belief that with enough knowledge of the structural and cultural contexts of operations, and the actors involved and their preferences, one can apply the correct actions and activities and thereby produce specific pre-defined outcomes.'[6] Yet the normative aspirations of SSR are well grounded in the wider theoretical underpinnings of Western civil-military relations. It is these concepts which SSR ultimately seeks to export, and therefore on which the viability of SSR agendas are predicated.

Western civil-military thought is traditionally defined by one fundamental tenet; that of civilian control of the military, otherwise referred to as military accountability. This principle has deep roots in Western political philosophy. In *The Republic*, for instance, Plato imagined an ideal state in which the military class served the interests of the people while remaining subordinate to the aims of the polity. He likened these 'guardians' to dogs of war; 'gentle to friends and fierce to strangers'.[7] In more recent times, scholars of Western civil-military

[2] The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *The OECD DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice* (2007), p. 13.
[3] The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, *Security System Reform and Governance: A DAC Reference Document* (2005), p. 11.
[4] Clare Short, 'A Humanitarian Surge and its Demise, 1997 to 2003: A Personal Account', *Peacebuilding*, 1:1 (2013), pp. 33-7.
[5] Nicole Ball & Dylan Hendrickson, 'Trends in Security Sector Reform (SSR): Policy, Practice and Research', Conflict, Security and Development Group Working Papers No. 20 (London, 2009), online at: www.securityanddevelopment.org/pdf/CSDG%20Paper%2020.pdf, accessed 25/03/15.
[6] Robert Egnell & Peter Haldén, 'Laudable, Ahistorical and Overambitious: Security Sector Reform Meets State Formation Theory', *Conflict, Security & Development*, 9:1 (2009), pp. 27-54.
[7] Plato, *The Republic*, G.R.F. Ferrari (ed.) & Tom Griffith (trans.), (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000).

relations have, like Plato, sought to find ideal typologies of civil control of the military. These have been concerned with the fundamental question of how military forces capable of defending the state can be rendered subservient to the people they exist to protect – of who guards the guardians? The classic explanation for military accountability to civilian authority is found in the idea of military professionalism, articulated by Huntington in *The Solider and the State*. Huntington compared Cold War civil-military relations in the United States and the Soviet Union to conclude that civilian ascendancy was best guaranteed through "objective control". "Subjective control", as displayed by the Soviet Union, saw political commissars ensure military loyalty through direct involvement in military affairs, concomitantly resulting in the politicisation of the military. In contrast, Huntington accounted for military subservience to civilian government in the US through the military's status as a largely self-governing profession with sole claims to authority over defined areas of state business. Not only did this "objective control" permit the development of the distinct military values necessary for combat effectiveness, but it largely confined the armed forces to a discrete area of responsibility; warfighting.[8]

Huntington's argument proved immediately controversial, giving rise to perennial debate over the so-called 'civil-military gap'.[9] Moreover, contemporaries argued that contrary to Huntington's claims, the US military was in fact becoming less insular and more reflective of the occupational and professional traits prevalent in wider American society.[10] Indeed, Huntington's conception of military professionalism runs dangerously close to a tautology in which objective control is synonymous with professionalism, such that 'professional officers never intervene [in politics], because if they do, they are not true professionals'.[11] In reality, the principle of civilian control over the military has frequently proved illusory. Although effective civilian governments

[8] Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1957).
[9] See Hew Strachan, 'The Civil-military "Gap" in Britain', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 26:2 (2003), pp. 43-63.
[10] Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York, NY, The Free Press, 1960); Morris Janowitz & Charles C. Moskos, 'Racial Composition in the All-Volunteer Force', *Armed Forces & Society*, 1:1 (1974), pp. 109-123; Charles C. Moskos, 'Institutional/Occupational Trends in Armed Forces: An Update', *Armed Forces & Society*, 12:3 (1986), pp. 377-382; cf. Charles C. Moskos, 'From Institution to Occupation: Trends in Military Organization', *Armed Forces & Society*, 4:1 (1977), pp. 41-50.
[11] Bengt Abrahamsson, quoted in Thomas C. Bruneau, 'Impediments to Conceptualizing Civil-Military Relations', in Bruneau & Matei, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

can successfully maintain control over their armed forces, such supervision has traditionally been viewed as the exception rather than the norm, as Finer highlighted.[12] Indeed, a primary justification for the development of SSR as a concept lies in the fact that without at least tacit military support for democratisation, armed forces have repeatedly presented an insurmountable obstacle to political change.[13]

Recently, this dissatisfaction with Huntington's model has led to increased interest in the importance of military effectiveness in civil-military relations. Matei has argued for a new conceptualisation comprised of a trinity of control, effectiveness and efficiency, on the basis that civilian control is 'irrelevant unless the instruments for achieving security can effectively fulfil their roles and missions.'[14] This understanding is reflected in policy literature on SSR. For example, a 2004 evaluation of the British Government's SSR Strategy commissioned by DFID noted that military professionalism was constituted by both technical and normative dynamics. Normative components described appropriate civil-military behaviour, while the technical elements were related to the armed forces' ability to carry out their military function. It concluded that in reality, 'there is considerable overlap between the two'.[15] Thus, it is not so much the objective structure of government-military interactions which defines military professionalism, as Huntington argued, but the relationship between the military's values, or "norms", and its occupational function.

The recognition that normative values largely underpin democratic civil-military relations is derived from the growth of constructivism in international relations.[16] Early work on the role of norms and values in international security

[12] Samuel E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics* (New York, NY, Praeger, 1962).
[13] Zoltan D. Barany, *The Soldier and the Changing State: Building Democratic Armies in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2012); Thomas C. Bruneau, 'Challenges in Building Partner Capacity: Civil-Military Relations in the United States and New Democracies', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 26:3 (2015), p. 431.
[14] Florina Christiana Matei, 'A New Conceptualisation of Civil-Military Relations' in Bruneau & Matei, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-38. See also Thomas C. Bruneau, 'Efficiency in the Use of Resources', in *ibid*, p. 29-33.
[15] Nicole Ball, 'Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools: The Security Sector Reform Strategy', DFID Evaluation Report EV 647 (Bradford, 2004), p. 48.
[16] For recent works adopting the constructivist focus on norms in national security issues, see Theo Farrell & Terry Terriff, *The Sources of Military Change: Culture, Politics, Technology* (Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner, 2002); Tarak Barkawi, 'Subaltern Soldiers: Eurocentricism and the Nation-State in the Combat Motivation Debates', in Anthony King (ed.), *Frontline: Combat and Cohesion in the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford, Oxford Univeristy Press, 2015), pp. 24-45.

largely developed out of the concept of strategic culture. Observing that America's opponents often understood nuclear war (and thus nuclear deterrence) in strikingly different ways to the US view, Gray postulated that strategic action was not inherently rational, but instead the product of peculiar national interpretations of history and politics.[17] Later generations of scholars have sought to somewhat deconstruct this idea of culture, decrying the potential for cultural analysis to descend into an 'everything but the kitchen sink' approach.[18] However, this has not reduced the relevance of constructivist analyses, with scholars such as Gray and Farrell subsequently demonstrating that cultural values both shape and constitute strategic behaviour, which is itself inevitably 'effected by human beings who cannot help but be cultural agents'.[19] Typifying this school of thought, Katzenstein argued that the choices made by states in the international system can only be fully understood by reference to the social and cultural values through which states and sub-state organisations interpret each other's behaviour, and accordingly their own possibilities for action. For Katzenstein, these "norms" 'describe collective expectations for the proper behaviour of actors with a given identity'. Accordingly, norms may be either constitutive – rules that define identity – or regulative – standards that define proper behaviour.[20] This sociological understanding thus divides norms into two constituent categories of *attitudes* and *behaviours*. The relationship between these two normative components is significant, because while attitudes are extremely difficult to empirically measure, behaviours are eminently observable.[21]

The importance of military norms in ensuring democratic civil-military relations is implicit; civilian control over the military is potentially problematic

[17] Colin S. Gray, 'National Style in Strategy: The American Example', *International Security*, 6:2 (1981), pp. 21-47; Colin S. Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National Style* (Lanham, MD, Hamilton Press/Abt Books, 1986).
[18] Alastair Iain Johnston, *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 13.
[19] Theo Farrell, 'Culture and Military Power', *Review of International Studies*, 24 (1998), p. 408. See also Rashed Uz Zaman, 'Strategic Culture: A "Cultural" Understanding of War', *Comparative Strategy*, 28:1 (2009), pp. 68-88.
[20] Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York, NY, Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 5.
[21] For sociological discussion on defining the concept of norms, and its application in international relations, see Jack P. Gibbs, 'Norms: The Problem of Definition and Classification', *American Journal of Sociology*, 70:5 (1965), pp. 586-94; Iver B. Neumann, 'Review: Identity and Security'*, Journal of Peace Research*, 29:2 (1992), pp. 221-6; Rodger A. Payne, 'Persuasion, Frames and Norm Construction', *European Journal of International Relations*, 7:1 (2001), pp. 37-61.

precisely because a military capable of effectively defending the state is presumably capable of overthrowing or usurping it. Civil control, notwithstanding any bureaucratic or institutional safeguards, must therefore be reliant at least in part on the military's voluntary consent. The power of norms in governing military behaviour can be seen in the self-imposed and self-limiting practices maintained by armed forces even in the face of the enemy. Legro has highlighted the antipathy towards chemical weapons exhibited by both the British and Germans during the Second World War. Consequently, both sides declined to use chemical weapons despite opportunities to do so with effect, and suppressed escalatory calls to break the taboo from among their own ranks.[22] Such is the influence of these norms on the conduct of war, that Farrell has described war itself as a culturally defined project.[23] Accordingly, Bruneau aptly characterises civilian control of the military in the United States as a product of 'the trinity of money, careers, and *culture*'.[24] Thus, the central problem of SSR which externally-directed military change seeks to address, is how to change the *military culture* of foreign armed forces so as to produce normative civil-military behaviour.

The Causes of Military Change

A significant field of academic research has developed examining the causes and mechanisms of military change, also variously referred to as military innovation or transformation. Although primarily interested in the dynamics of military change in a single-national context, this body of scholarship developed largely as a sub-discipline of international relations. These concepts provide important insights into the mechanisms through which national military institutions are altered, offering a theoretical lens through which to examine the conduct of military change driven by external interventionists. Just as the constructivist turn in international relations highlighted the importance of military norms and organisational culture in underpinning democratic civil-military relations, so the influence of norms and military cultures have come to feature prominently in explanations of military change. In particular, these arguments

[22] Jeffrey W. Legro, 'Military Culture and Inadvertent Escalation in World War II', *International Security*, 18:4 (1994), pp. 108-142.
[23] Theo Farrell, *The Norms of War: Cultural Beliefs and Modern Conflict* (Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner, 2005).
[24] Bruneau, 'Challenges in Building Partner Capacity', *op. cit.*, p. 431. Emphasis added.

have highlighted the importance of military attitudes in shaping the military's proclivities towards change – i.e. in defining the types of new behaviour which will be considered acceptable or otherwise – either by impelling change, or by precluding it.

In *Imagining War*, Kier demonstrated the strength of military cultural norms in conditioning the adoption of military policies. In her comparison of the British and French armies in the inter-war years, Kier showed how the cultural preconceptions of the British and French militaries led them to adopt different policies in response to the same threat of German revanchism. The French political left, imbued with the republican principles of the *levée en masse* and the nation in arms, viewed the professional military as a tool of domestic oppression. Consequently, leftist political parties viewed a citizen army as a fundamental bulwark against the usurpation of civil liberties and advocated a conscript army based on the shortest period of service possible. In contrast, the political right viewed a long-service military as an essential defence against civil disorder. The French Army in the inter-war years thus found itself sandwiched between two competing ideological standpoints. However, these contrasting views only became significant for military strategy because of the cultural preconceptions of the French professional officer corps, which believed that short-service conscripts were incapable of performing complex offensive operations. Thus in 1928, when the left-leaning French government cut the term of conscript service to a year, French officers could conceive of no way of conducting offensive operations with such inexperienced troops and accordingly abandoned their previous offensive doctrine in favour of a defensive strategy. This proved disastrous in the campaign of 1940; but it was a decision the French military needn't have taken. The First World War had repeatedly demonstrated short-service conscripts' ability to conduct offensive operations, and the German invasion of France in 1914 had been conducted with significant numbers of reservists in the first line. However, the cultural preconceptions of professional French officers prevented the lesson from being learnt.[25]

However, the explanatory power of military norms in producing change has recently come under attack. Echoing wider criticism of constructivist

[25] Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 39-88.

approaches to international relations and security studies,[26] Griffin has contended that while 'cultural approaches obviously accord culture greater status in shaping innovation they do not challenge the primacy of conventionally conceived explanations of what drives innovation'. He notes, for example, how constructivist analyses stop short of rejecting structural or functional explanations of military change altogether; while they highlight the importance of military norms in shaping change, they in effect subordinate it to other imperatives for change at the same time.[27] For example, Griffin quotes Murray's study of wartime military change, which concluded that 'the organizational culture of particular military organizations formed during peacetime will determine how effectively they will adapt to the actual conditions they will face in war';[28] military norms define the landscape of military change, constraining or focusing it, but in Griffin's view, cannot independently account for it.

Griffin concluded that normative explanations for military change have been curtailed by the field's 'own theoretical conservatism', which largely stems from the fact that most academics operating in the field work closely with military practitioners and so privilege applied research over theoretical advancement. Consequently, he contends that there has been a tendency to view different models of military change as mutually compatible, despite the fact that they are grounded in mutually exclusive (or at the least antagonistic) underlying theories of international relations.[29] Consequently, Griffin has identified a number of areas of knowledge which remain remarkably under-examined by the literature on military change; chief among them, the 'relationship between internal and external drivers of change'.[30] While Griffin's critique is intended as a rallying cry to strengthen the theoretical rigour of academic scholarship on military change, it also refocuses inquiry into the

[26] Michael A. Desch, 'Culture Versus Structure in Post-9-11 Security Studies', *Strategic Insights*, 4:10 (2005), pp. 1-12.
[27] Stuart Griffin, 'Military Innovation Studies: Multidisciplinary or Lacking Discipline?', *Journal of Strategic Studies* (2016), pp. 9-10, online first at http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01402390.2016.1196358?needAccess=true, accessed 01/09/16.
[28] Williamson Murray, *Military Adaptation in War: With Fear of Change* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011), quoted in *ibid.*, p. 9.
[29] Griffin, 'Military Innovation Studies', *op. cit.*, pp. 8-13. See also, Stuart Griffin, 'Military Innovation Studies: Well-Set for the Future?', *Defence-in-Depth: Research from the Defence Studies Department, King's College London*, 05 August 2015, online at https://defenceindepth.co/2015/08/05/military-innovation-studies-well-set-for-the-future-2/, accessed on 29/06/16.
[30] Griffin, 'Military Innovation Studies: Multidisciplinary or Lacking Discipline?', *op. cit.*, p. 19.

relative compatibility of cultural explanations for military change against functional and structural explanations; namely, schools of thought advancing the causal power of civil-military relations, inter- and intra-service rivalries, and adaptation in combat.[31]

Much of the early scholarship focused on changes in military doctrine. As Kilcullen argued, however, in the broadest sense 'Doctrine is not only an idealized description of how things are done but also an attempt to inculcate habits of mind and action that change organizational culture and behaviour. It is an institutional rudder that helps turn the enormous bureaucracies it informs.'[32] In his seminal work, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, Posen kick-started the study of military change as an academic discipline and established a civil-military explanation for doctrinal change.[33] Posen argued that developments in military doctrine were primarily the product of civilian political intervention into the workings of military institutions. Posen held that externally-directed reform was necessary to stimulate innovation, primarily because armed forces were by nature inherently resistant to change. Although contested by later scholars, Posen viewed armies, like all bureaucratic institutions, as primarily concerned with survival, and as such, pre-occupied with managing risk. Unlike many bureaucratic institutions, however, armed forces spend far more of their time preparing to perform their primary function – warfare – than actually doing it. This poses a fundamental problem for armed forces, which must anticipate the requirements of the next war without foreknowledge of its dynamics or circumstances. Consequently, military changes which seek to deviate from established, tried and tested institutional processes are inherently uncertain and risky, as well as bureaucratically difficult, and so are actively suppressed by inherently conservative military establishments.[34]

Examining the development of military doctrine in France, Germany and Britain between the First and Second World Wars, Posen concluded that military innovation was primarily a response to heightened international threat.

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[31] This characterisation follows Griffin, *ibid.*, p. 3 and Adam Grissom, 'The Future of Military innovation Studies', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 29:5 (2006), p. 908.
[32] David Kilcullen, *Counterinsurgency* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 20.
[33] Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1984).
[34] *Ibid.* See also, Jack Snyder, *The Ideology of the Offensive: Military Decision Making and the Disasters of 1914* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1989).

At such times, civilian policy makers – at other times generally content to ignore the military – sought to directly interfere in military affairs in order to stimulate innovations they viewed as necessary for continued national security. Through comparative analysis of the significant doctrinal approaches which emerged during the inter-war period – namely German Blitzkrieg, the British air defence network, and French defensive doctrine epitomised by the Maginot Line – Posen observed that the mechanism for civilian intervention was for politicians to patronise military 'mavericks' at the expense of their more conservative colleagues. Politicians sought out officers at the periphery of their profession whose radical new views of military doctrine accorded with civilian perceptions of the required change. Doctrinal innovation and accompanying changes in military organisations were, therefore, necessitated by changes in the international system, but accomplished by direct civilian intervention into military affairs. Posen thus presents a model of military change based around external direction, in which the stimulus for change originates from outside the armed forces and is largely imposed on the military from above, top-down, via the activities of a small number of client military commanders whose authority stems from without.[35]

Posen's conception of militaries as ossified institutions requiring reform from outside was prominently challenged by Avant, who nonetheless advanced Posen's civil-military model of military change.[36] Avant noted that many armed forces have successfully reformed themselves without direct civilian instruction. For example, the British Army responded to the challenges of limited war during both the Boer War and the Malayan emergency, despite an institutional focus on other types of conflict. Comparing British and American political institutions, Avant concluded that the structure and organisation of the civilian political, administrative and legislative bodies overseeing the armed forces radically shaped the incentives for military leaders to innovate. In the US, where the structures of government act competitively to check and balance each other, lack of consensus served to reduce incentives for military commanders. Instead, commanders could court different legislative bodies depending on which best supported the status quo; the political environment allowed

[35] Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, *op. cit.*
[36] Deborah D. Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1994).

commanders to hedge, providing little stimulus for change. In contrast, relative harmony among British political institutions meant that elite civilian supervision of the military was far less divided. Here, incentives for military commanders to reform were clear, and the penalties for not doing so equally apparent. While military organisations can change without explicit civilian intervention, Avant concluded that effective civilian supervision meant that armies chose not to wait for direct civilian intervention before developing their doctrine; the past record of civilian preferences, interventions, and ongoing oversight provided a sufficient guide to civilian expectations to stimulate the necessary military policy changes. Nonetheless, civilian policy maker's supervision of the military is central to Avant's analysis of military change; its character either provides the space for military culture to impede change, or instead impels it.

However, Rosen strongly rejected the importance of civilian pressures in stimulating military change. Rosen noted how doctrinal changes were often already underway in the military prior to civilian interest in the reforms. These changes were the product of internal competition between rival factions in the officer corps, led by well-respected conventional military professionals rather than mavericks on the fringes. Here, reform-minded officers pursued complex campaigns of bureaucratic politics in order to co-opt colleagues to their 'new way of war', thus gaining both influence and legitimacy among the wider officer corps. Civilian elites could certainly accelerate this process through intervention, but only had real effect after the concept had already gained significant traction among military officers themselves. Instead, the *process* of military change was a product of competition in the officer corps between alternate visions of the military. Importantly, this caused rivals to seek control of military training and promotional policies. Once in the ascendancy, reformers institutionalised their desired change by creating new career pathways within the service. Crucially, these new promotional structures ensured that ambitious junior officers joining the institution would be inculcated with the new way of thinking, and would eventually be able to reach senior command positions. Thus, the military's own institutional training and socialisation processes, and its bureaucratic promotional processes, were used to propagate and perpetuate the norms of the new military ascendancy, securing the reforms and protecting them from

rival camps in the officer corps.[37] But the impetus for change itself stemmed from competing military cultures.

For Rosen, these processes of bureaucratic change were not exclusively carried out through military infighting and subsequent promotional reforms, but also through the tools of bureaucratic oversight. For example, Rosen emphasised the importance of feedback loops through which senior commanders monitor compliance at lower levels of the military hierarchy. Ultimately though, it is the institution, and the support of important figures within the institutional hierarchy, which determined success. Rosen's model is consequently best described as one of top-down change; but one in which the prospects for success or failure, as well as the likely originator of reform, resides firmly within military. Similarly, other examples of military reform have been attributed to inter-service competition over funding, where rival services compete to secure funding by developing new ways of war which accord with civilian elites' wider policy preferences.[38] While civil-military dynamics might therefore play a role in inter-service mechanisms of change, as civilian politicians act as arbiters between service rivalries, the locus of specific changes nonetheless originates from within the armed services, as in Rosen's description of intra-service rivalry.

In recent years, these top-down conceptions of military change have largely been eclipsed by scholarship emphasising bottom-up military adaptation. Interest in military adaptation largely developed out of the Western military experience in Afghanistan and Iraq, though its origins can be seen in literature on wider defence reforms pre-dating those campaigns. In his critique of the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), for example, Cohen found that the RMA was not only culturally and politically situated but largely 'brought about by spontaneous innovation in reaction to tactical problems'.[39] The concept of military innovation through bottom-up adaptation, while in many respects the product of empirical observation of ongoing military change, has its theoretical roots in Clausewitzian understandings of war. For Clausewitz, war was a living

[37] Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1991); see also, Theo Farrell, 'The Dynamics of British Military Transformation', *International Affairs*, 84:4 (2008), pp. 777-807.
[38] See Grissom, 'The Future of Military innovation Studies', *op. cit.*, pp. 910-3.
[39] Eliot A. Cohen, 'Change and Transformation in Military Affairs', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 27:3 (2004), p. 401.

and evolving beast, like 'the collision of two living forces', akin to 'a duel on a larger scale'. Thus, as each side reacts to the other, and seeks advantage in turn, potentially driving war towards extremes, so equally the conduct of warfare evolves in response to the actions of the other duellist.[40] As such, the concept of military adaptation is typically linked to change during (and as a result of) actual combat, distinguishing it from theories of peacetime top-down military transformation. In addition to this military necessity impelling adaptation, Farrell has highlighted further conditions under which adaptation may become more likely. These include: poor organisational memory (particularly of past approaches or doctrinal solutions); decentralisation, which passes authority to act down to levels actually in contact; and regular personnel turnover, which provides clear breaks at which changes in approach may be effected.[41] Other scholars have subsequently added to this list, arguing that supportive leadership helps enable a culture in which the risks of adaptation are accepted, and Rosen's feedback loops help adapters monitor the success of their amendments and further adjust them.[42]

In an early attempt to draw attention to the phenomenon, Grissom cited the changing applications of Flak 88 artillery pieces in the inter-war Wehrmacht as a prominent example of institutional change caused by tactical adaptation. The Flak 88 was originally designed as an anti-aircraft weapon, but became one of the most prolific German anti-tank guns of the Second World War. However, its potential in this role was only realised after local battlefield improvisation during the Spanish Civil War. Here, a Condor Legion anti-aircraft battery commander, finding himself unsupported and hard pressed by enemy armour, was forced to use his Flak 88 anti-aircraft guns in the direct-fire role in a last ditch-attempt to save his guns from the advancing tanks. It was only through this piece of improvisation by a junior commander that the German military discovered the utility to the weapon against armour, and restructured accordingly.[43] However, it was the wartime experience of counter-insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan which most prominently highlighted these grass-roots,

[40] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Michael Howard & Peter Paret (ed. & trans), (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 75-77.
[41] Theo Farrell, 'Improving in War: Military Adaptation and the British in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006–2009', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33:4 (2010), pp. 583-8.
[42] Kristen A. Harkness & Michael Hunzeker, 'Military Maladaptation: Counterinsurgency and the Politics of Failure', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 38:6 (2015), pp. 781-5.
[43] Grissom, 'The Future of Military innovation Studies', *op. cit.*, pp. 920-1.

bottom-up processes of "organic" change. In a highly influential article, Farrell expertly traced adjustments in the praxis of asymmetric warfare adopted by successive British brigades in Helmand between 2006 and 2009 in response to the challenges of counter-insurgency and the prospect of strategic failure.[44] Various scholars have subsequently sought to test and expand these concepts through reference to historical cases, as well as other combatants' experiences of campaigning in Afghanistan, including adaptations undertaken by the Taliban in response to Western counter-insurgency.[45]

Paradoxically, it appears that many of the factors which facilitate military adaptation – such as decentralisation and poor institutional memory – also impede the longevity, dissemination and sustainment of those adaptations in the wider military organisation. Indeed, Farrell suggested that one of the primary requirements for British military adaptation in Helmand was caused by the British Army's failure to remember its previous experiences of counter-insurgency, or indeed its own extant doctrine on the subject.[46] Thus, grass-roots innovations must at some stage become institutionalised in order to persist. It is only through access to the resources, authority and legitimacy of the military as an institution that bottom-up changes can propagate and sustain themselves. Moreover, while many adaptive responses to warfare are exclusively tactical in nature – such as adjustments in tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) – it is only through wider institutional change that such adaptations conglomerate to form a coherent new way of war. Consequently, academic interest in military adaptation has focused on mechanisms through which adaptive changes are institutionalised and thus affect wider military norms, resulting in significant interest on "lessons learnt" processes. These institutional mechanisms capture adaptations, or "lessons learnt", filter them for content and then disseminate significant adaptations among the wider military institution. Examination of lessons learnt mechanisms in the Israeli, British, US and Australian militaries have highlighted how these processes can, to a greater or lesser extent, be

[44] Farrell, 'Improving in War', *op. cit*.
[45] Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga & James A. Russell (eds.), *Military Adaptation in Afghanistan* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2013); in particular, Antonio Giustozzi, 'Military Adaptation by the Taliban, 2001-2011' in *ibid.*, pp. 242-262.
[46] Farrell, 'Improving in War', *op. cit.*, p. 572.

used to cascade adaptation 'up' the military institution.[47] Marcus, for example, concluded that 'organizational change in the IDF [Israel Defence Force] results from a dynamic interplay between both top-down and bottom-up processes of military innovation'.[48] Historians have similarly emphasised the historical precedents to this recent trend in counter-insurgency focused adaptation, pointing to lesson-learning and adaptation during the First World War. Foley has even identified historical examples of other mechanisms for disseminating wartime adaptation, such as 'horizontal' change in the Imperial German Army, whereby military units shared experiences of adaptation and military best practice among each other at the same tactical level.[49]

Yet the difficulty of institutionalising wartime adaptation, and thus sustaining adaptive military change and transforming it into more profound doctrinal reform, has been discussed by a number of scholars. For example, Kollars highlighted how the various organisational models, employed by the US military in Vietnam and Afghanistan to enable equipment adaptation, failed to produce sustainable innovation. Kollars concluded that the resulting 'adhocracies' were inherently limited to providing unsustainable wartime fixes, because their informal organisational approach and operating mechanisms were unable to mesh formally with the more ordered peacetime military bureaucracies.[50] Similarly, Harkness and Hunzeker demonstrated how the political complexities of military operations can impede battlefield adaptation, in their recent examination of failed change during the British campaign in the Southern Cameroons in 1960-1. There, the British Army identified the changes required to address tactical and operational threats, but were prevented from implementing them owing to domestic political considerations; the British

[47] Robert T. Foley, Stuart Griffin & Helen McCartney, '"Transformation in contact": Learning the Lessons of Modern War', *International Affairs*, 87:2 (2011), pp. 253-70; Paddy O'Toole & Steven Talbot, 'Fighting for Knowledge: Developing Learning Systems in the Australian Army', *Armed Forces & Society*, 37:1 (2011), pp. 42-67.
[48] Raphael D. Marcus, 'Military Innovation and Tactical Adaptation in the Israel-Hizballah Conflict: The Institutionalization of Lesson-Learning in the IDF', *Journal of Strategic Studies* (August 2014), p. 502.
[49] Robert T. Foley, 'Dumb Donkeys or Cunning Foxes? Learning in the British and German Armies During the Great War', *International Affairs*, 90:2 (2014), pp. 279-98; Robert T. Foley, 'A Case Study in Horizontal Military Innovation: The German Army, 1916–1918', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 35:6 (2012), pp. 799-827.
[50] Nina Kollars, 'Organising Adaptation in War', *Survival*, 57:6 (2015), pp. 111-126.

government decided that the costs of tactical adaptation in the Southern Cameroons were not worth the limited strategic gains they would bring.[51]

More significantly, Catignani has questioned the ability of lessons learnt processes to fundamentally alter the core institutional processes which shape military organisations. Examining the British Army's adoption of counter-insurgency doctrine, Catignani found that the dissemination of lessons learnt failed to overcome the British Army's deeply ingrained cultural preference for a conventional approach to operations. Despite a good understanding of the concepts of population-centric counter-insurgency at the operational level, this was not widely shared by subordinates at the tactical level. Despite the British Army's ongoing counter-insurgency campaign in Helmand, officers and soldiers continued to be trained and educated primarily for conventional war. In some cases, this resulted in the informal exchange of best practice in counter-insurgency via officers' social networks, in partial compensation for the deficiencies of formal training. Thus, while battlefield pressures did produce some tactical adaptations to counter-insurgency, their local utility did not overcome the British Army's institutional preference for conventional warfighting, and consequently many soldiers' views of military best practice. This perception was reinforced by the British Army's promotional system, which privileged conventional warfighting skills.[52] In a direct challenge to Farrell's description of British military adaptation in Helmand, King concluded that changes in the practice of British counter-insurgency were in fact conditioned by the British military's organisational culture. Although commanders recognised that consecutive decisions to decentralise troop deployments (instead of concentrating forces) were likely to be counter-productive, they were nonetheless impelled by the Army's offensive culture and competing regimental rivalries.[53]

Notwithstanding Griffin's criticism of theoretical ambivalence, it appears that military norms and organisational culture significantly account for the *form*

[51] Harkness & Hunzeker, *op. cit.*
[52] Sergio Catignani, '"Getting COIN" at the Tactical Level in Afghanistan: Reassessing Counter-Insurgency Adaptation in the British Army', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 35:4 (2012), pp. 513–539; Sergio Catignani, 'Coping with Knowledge: Organizational Learning in the British Army?', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 37:1 (2014), pp. 30-64.
[53] Anthony King, 'Understanding the Helmand Campaign: British Military Operations in Afghanistan', *International Affairs*, 86: 2 (2010), pp. 311–332.

of military change, by either preventing or impelling specific reforms or adaptations which arise out of strategic or tactical circumstance. However, it remains significantly unclear as to *how* change reciprocally affects military norms and organisational culture – that is, if military culture affects military change, how does military change effect military culture? In SSR, structural and organisational changes are specifically intended to remake military norms in line with the principles of democratic civil-military relations. Yet in current scholarship on the causes and processes of military change, military norms are typically viewed as an independent variable rather than a dependent one; permitting, impelling, or impeding outcomes. While constructivist approaches to military change do not view military culture as ossified, they typically consider military norms to be inherently difficult to change.[54]

Farrell and Terriff's edited work on military change provided three explanations for military cultural change: leaders can reshape culture; external shocks might necessitate cultural change; and emulation of foreign military models may produce an accompanying emulation of foreign military norms.[55] Hence, Saideman found that Canadian military change during operations in Afghanistan was not primarily the product of adaptation, but of generational change among Canada's military leadership. Influenced by their experience of peacekeeping, senior Canadian commanders were highly risk averse during early deployments to Afghanistan, preventing their subordinate operational commanders from undertaking major operations let alone adaptations to combat. Only after officers with direct personal experience of asymmetric warfare rose to senior appointments, and ultimately the Chief of Defence Staff, did restrictions on theatre commanders relax, permitting adaptive change. Thus, normative change in Canada's military was prompted by the military's own process of generational replacement, facilitating tactical adaptation and organisational reform.[56] Murray observed a similar dynamic in the US military following the Vietnam War.[57]

[54] Theo Farrell & Terry Terriff, 'The Sources of Military Change', in Farrell & Terriff, *op. cit*, p. 8.
[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.
[56] Stephen M. Saideman, 'Canadian Forces in Afghanistan: Minority Government and Generational Change While Under Fire', in Farrell, Osinga & Russell, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-241.
[57] Williamson Murray, 'Does Military Culture matter?', *Orbis*, 43:1 (1999), p. 30.

Examining the interwar Irish military, Farrell found that Irish military officers' professional culture determined which innovations were adopted, regardless of their relative strategic utility. Between the world wars, Ireland found itself caught between Britain and Germany, whose rivalry and military superiority rendered both a strategic threat. In response, Ireland adopted a professional model of military service, which emphasised conventional manoeuvre and deterrence, rather than a mass citizen army which would utilise guerrilla tactics to defend Ireland from invasion. Although Ireland's small professional military could never have been funded sufficiently to conventionally defend the country, its development was actively pursued by Irish officers. The concept of a citizen army was dismissed, despite its greater strategic utility and the significant recent Irish experience of guerrilla warfare. Ultimately, military elites preferred the greater legitimacy a conventional military structure was perceived to confer, and their political masters concurred, recognising that the image of the Irish state would vicariously benefit.[58] Here, Farrell concluded that military cultural norms 'shape and are shaped by military emulation'.[59]

In similar fashion, Germany's recent adoption of network centric-warfare has proved of limited benefit, as it was primarily adopted to imitate perceived professional best practice rather than because it was particularly appropriate to the needs of the German military.[60] Both Farrell's example of the interwar Irish military's strategic decision-making and the German adoption of network-centric warfare might reasonably be described as examples of normative isomorphism, in which shared professional norms led to the adoption of a professionally normative approach because of its conferred legitimacy. However, the British adoption of network-centric warfare, which centred on its strategic utility and adjusted the concept to enhance its functionality in peculiar local circumstances, might be described as a process of strategic emulation or mimetic isomorphism, in which external practices are adopted because of their perceived utility.[61] This dynamic has also been used to explain the relative success of some historical cases of externally-led military change. During the nineteenth and twentieth

[58] Theo Farrell, 'World Culture and the Irish Army, 1922-1942', in Farrell & Terriff, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-90.
[59] Farrell & Terriff, *op. cit*, p. 9.
[60] Ina Wiesner, *Importing the American Way of War? Network-Centric Warfare in the UK and Germany* (Baden-Baden, Nomos, 2013).
[61] *Ibid.*

centuries, countries as diverse as Mehmed Ali's Egypt, Ottoman Turkey, Afghanistan, Meiji Japan, and post-colonial Chile all invited foreign military missions to train their armed forces, adopting the Western military practices of their foreign patrons in the process.[62]

However, in these processes the desire to adopt a given change – and with it reshape organisational culture – originated from within the recipient state, with foreign expertise only subsequently sought to direct implementation. In the specific case of SSR, it is unclear why armed forces with little historical familiarity or normative inclination to submit to civil control – the armed forces Western interventionists perceive as most in need of SSR – should themselves decide to reform. The influence of civil-military oversight structures, which Avant considered crucial to change, seem an equally unlikely prospect as these institutions are typically weak, inchoate, or lacking in political consensus in fragile (post-)conflict environments. Equally, the role of leadership in reshaping military culture has been challenged even in a national military context. Kier noted that the course of military history is strewn with failed reforms and failed reformers, contending that 'organizational culture is not the sum of the values and beliefs of a few individual members', such that 'Replacing a few leading officers is unlikely to give rise to a new organizational culture'.[63]

Accordingly, the difficulty of effecting profound cultural change has also been used to explain the difficulty – or near impossibility – of conducting extraneous military change. In Grissom's study of ISAF's failure to fundamentally improve the military effectiveness of the ANA, externally-led Western changes were foiled by the neo-patrimonial behaviours of the Afghan military and political elite. Owing to the strong presence of international troops in the country, the ANA was insulated from the bottom-up adaptive pressures of combat, largely because ISAF's military operations both precluded existential ANA failure (at least for a time) and actually supplanted the ANA's own presence on many operations. Instead, ISAF's organisational changes, which

[62] Emily O. Goldman, 'The Spread of Western Models to Ottoman Turkey and Meiji Japan', in Farrell & Terriff, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-68; John P. Dunn, 'Missions or Mercenaries? European Military Advisors in Mehmed Ali's Egypt, 1815-1848', in Donald Stoker (ed.), *Military Advising and Assistance: From Mercenaries to Privatization, 1815-2007* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2008), pp. 11-25; William F. Sater, 'The Impact of Foreign Advisors on Chile's Armed Forces, 1810-2005', in *ibid.*, pp. 26-41.
[63] Kier, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

appropriately or otherwise mimicked Western military practice, failed to dislodge Afghan social and political behavioural norms, compromising their utility.[64] In short, the rapid expansion, re-equipment, and organisational redevelopment of the ANA which ISAF was able to enforce did not affect its underlying culture, which itself was not conducive to operational capability in a conventional Western sense, and consequently military effectiveness failed to improve. Here, the inability for external processes of change to effectively interact with equivalent internal processes resulted in failure. Externally-led Western military reforms were inappropriate because they could not change local culture, mirroring wider critiques of liberal peacebuilding advanced by critical scholars, who instead advocate more "locally-sensitive" projects like accommodation with warlordic militias.[65]

Thus, understanding how military norms are produced is vital to understanding how externally-directed military change can occur. By understanding how military norms are generated – and therefore how they might be altered – we gain an insight into whether changes in military praxis are simply shaped by military culture, or whether external interventionists may use organisational change to reciprocally shape local culture as well. As military accountability in Western civil-military relations is significantly the product of military norms, understanding how those norms are produced and promulgated in Western militaries becomes vital to understanding the prospects for exporting them – to the very viability of SSR as a tool of policy.

(Re)Making Military Culture

In Western armed forces,[66] military norms of behaviour are typically inculcated through socialisation. These socialisation processes inculcate new soldiers with a common sense of military identity and values during basic training. As Soeters

[64] Adam Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars: NATO Advisors and Military Adaptation in the Afghan National Army, 2001-2011', in Farrell, Osinga & Russell, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-87.
[65] See Ariel I. Ahram, 'Learning to Live with Militias: Toward a Critical Policy on State Frailty', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 5:2 (2011), pp. 175-92; Ches Thurber, 'Militias as Sociopolitical Movements: Lessons from Iraq's Armed Shia Groups', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 25:5-6 (2014), pp. 900-23.
[66] Here, I refer to armed forces which follow a modern Western form of organisation, training and education, and philosophy of war. These are not confined to the geographical west, but include many other prominent military powers, including, for example, the armed forces of Israel and parts of the British Commonwealth, and a number of Asian states such as South Korea, among others.

et al noted, 'Culture is learned, not inherited.'[67] In the IDF, for instance, ritualistic socialisation processes are used to inculcate a collective sense of Jewish identity and fighting spirit. From the early 1950s, the IDF armoured corps swore in new recruits in a special ceremony held at Masada. According to Israeli mythology, this mountain fortress was defended to the last by Jewish patriots besieged by the Romans, who in a last act of defiance decided to commit collective suicide rather than surrender. IDF soldiers were encouraged to live up to the values of this legend through a military initiation rite at Masada, after a gruelling hike to the summit. As per Gray's understanding of strategic culture, the Masada legend appears to have little basis in historical fact, but this nonetheless proved irrelevant to its socialising value for the IDF. When swearing in ceremonies ended at Masada in 1991 they were continued at Latrun, the home of the IDF armoured corps and the site its first major engagement.[68] Comparable socialisation rituals are common in Western armed forces. At the French military academy at Saint Cyr, for example, progression through training is marked by a number of night-time rituals during which initiates receive various symbolic items of officers' uniform and accoutrements from senior officers. These ceremonies are accompanied by historical re-enactments of famous Napoleonic victories carried out by the students in full period dress.[69] As Holmes argued, military training not only inculcates skills, but also values. Training not only makes men act like soldiers, such that men in combat act in the way which they were trained, it also makes them *feel* like soldiers.[70]

Military socialisation processes are able to have such a profound normative effect on soldiers because armed forces exercise comparatively high levels of control over their members. Western armed forces have consequently been described as 'total institutions',[71] in which almost every aspect of daily life

[67] Jospeh L Soeters, Donna J. Winslow & Alise Weibull, 'Military Culture', in Giuseppe Caforio (ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military* (New York, NY, Springer, 2006), p. 238, pp. 249-52. See also, Thomas E. Ricks, *Making the Corps* (New York, NY, Scribner, 2007).
[68] Nachman Ben-Yehuda, 'The Masada Mythical Narrative and the Israeli Army', in Edna Lomsky-Feder & Eyal Ben-Ari (eds.), *The Military and Militarism in Israeli Society* (Albany, NY, State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 57-88.
[69] See French Army, 'Les écoles de Saint-Cyr Coëtquidan: Cérémonial', online at http://www.st-cyr.terre.defense.gouv.fr/index.php/Les-ecoles-de-Saint-Cyr-Coetquidan/Ceremonial, accessed on 25/03/16.
[70] See Richard Holmes, *Firing Line* (London, Jonathan Cape, 1985).
[71] For the classic work on 'total institutions' see Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968).

and individual conduct is governed by military norms. These codes of conduct are both positively inculcated and, where necessary, rigorously enforced; though the greater the acceptance of these military norms in an armed force, the more discipline tends towards normative correction through ostracism and denial of status as an in-group member, rather than formal punitive correction.[72] Such is the power of these military socialisation processes, that soldiers typically contextualise their operational experiences as uniquely military, even when deployed on explicitly policing tasks.[73] Indeed, military socialisation, and the behavioural norms it produces, is vital to the functioning of military forces. One study of the French Foreign Legion highlights how the rigid codes of conduct, status, hierarchy and discipline present in *la Légion étrangère* underpin legionnaire's obedience to orders.[74] Equally, the power of military training and socialisation processes has been considered responsible for the military's ability to persuade otherwise law abiding citizens to kill on command,[75] but also for instances where soldiers have knowingly carried out illegal orders; specifically, in instances where, despite their obvious illegality and wider social unacceptability, these illegal orders nonetheless accorded with the norms of military behaviour.[76]

Owing to the importance of these military norms in defining civil-military relations, many early attempts at SSR hoped to reshape military norms through the structural and social reorganisation of armed forces. In particular, this has been pursued through the creation of new "national armies", in which the composition of the armed forces reflects the political and ethnic demographics of wider society. Military integration programmes have been frequently used to achieve this, during which formerly warring factions are integrated into a unified military structure following a peace agreement. In the 1990s and early 2000s,

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[72] Anthony King, 'Discipline and Punish: Encouraging Combat Performance in the Citizen and Professional Army', in King, *Frontline*, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-115.
[73] Eyal Ben-Ari, 'Masks and Soldiering: The Israeli Army and the Palestinian Uprising', in Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari, *op. cit.*, pp. 169-190.
[74] Mikaela Sundberg, 'Hierarchy, Status, and Combat Motivation in the French Foreign Legion', in King, *Frontline*, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-233.
[75] Theodore Nadelson, *Trained to Kill: Soldiers at War* (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2005); Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (Boston, MA, Little, Brown & Co, 1996); Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-Face Killing in Twentieth Century Warfare* (London, Granta, 1999); Robert Johnson, 'Killing and Cohesion in Close Combat: Contexts and Concepts from the First World War to the Present', in King, *Frontline*, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-69.
[76] Pascal Vennesson, 'Cohesion and Misconduct: The French Army and the Mahé Affair', in King, *Frontline*, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-249.

external interventionists supported military integration following civil conflicts in Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa, Mozambique, Burundi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, the Philippines, Bosnia and Cambodia, among others.[77] In part, military integration programmes were so frequently implemented because they represent a pragmatic response to the political mechanisms employed by peacebuilders to end civil wars. Chief among these is power-sharing, in which former belligerents agree to share political power, or at least the institutions of the state, according to a detailed agreement. Power-sharing agreements are typically negotiated when a conflict has been fought to the point of mutually-hurting stalemate, or when a third party intervenes militarily to impose a settlement.[78] Envisaged as a temporary precursor to more direct forms of democratic government, power-sharing's perceived utility lies the ability to regulate Hobbesian security dilemmas that might otherwise push factions back into conflict.[79] This is achieved by giving antagonistic groups security guarantees through equal buy-in to state instruments; in particular, the state security apparatus.[80] In Northern Ireland, for example, the Patten Commission recognised that in order to maintain support for the Good Friday power-sharing agreement among both Republicans and Unionists, the reformed Police Service of Northern Ireland needed to recruit Protestant and Catholic officers in equal measure.[81]

Advocates of military integration consequently argue that the creation of representative national armies can help to forge new national identities and propagate these among society. Not only does this help create a new nation,

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[77] Stephen Burgess, 'Fashioning Integrated Security Forces after Conflict', *African Security*, 1:2 (2008), pp. 69-91; Roy Licklider (ed.), *New Armies from Old: Merging Competing Military Forces after Civil Wars* (Washington, DC, Georgetown University Press, 2014).
[78] See for example, Timothy D. Sisk, *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflicts* (Washington, DC, United States Institute of Peace Press, 1996); Barbara F. Walter, 'Designing Transitions from Civil War', in Barbara F. Walter & Jack Snyder (eds.), *Civil Wars, Insecurity, and Intervention* (New York, NY, Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 50-1.
[79] Marina Ottaway, 'Democratization in Collapsed States', in I. William Zartman (ed.), *Collapsed States: The Disintergration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner, 1995), pp. 235-49; Jack Snyder & Robert Jervis, 'Civil War and the Security Dilemma', in Walter & Snyder, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
[80] For example, see Caroline Hartzell & Matthew Hoddie, 'Institutionalizing Peace: Power Sharing and Post-Civil War Conflict Management', *American Journal of Political Science*, 47:2 (2003), pp. 318–332.
[81] Brendan O'Leary, 'Complex Power-sharing In and Over Northern Ireland: a Self-determination Agreement, a Treaty, a Consociation, a Federacy, Matching Confederal Institutions, Intergovernmentalism, and a Peace Process', in Marc Weller & Barbara Metzger (eds.), *Settling Self-Determination Disputes: Complex Power-Sharing in Theory and Practice* (Leiden, Nijhoff, 2008), pp. 61-124.

but it binds the new army to the new nation it represents – along with its civilian democratic leadership. Accordingly, Licklider has articulated a number of processes through which military integration contributes to sustainable democratic peace. Because the creation of integrated armies is undoubtedly a costly commitment, military integration may provide a practical indicator that peace overtures are sincere. Unified national armies similarly help to absorb former warring militiamen, who, in the absence of other gainful employment, might prove destabilising. Equally Licklider argues that integrated armies actively provide security for the power-sharing parties, deterring or defeating potential "spoilers". In so doing, military integration further serves as a symbol of national unity, helping to reshape the identity of former combatants and society at large; and with it, the military's internal culture.[82] In a similar fashion, policy studies of comparable civilian bureaucracies have found that social representation in state organs improves public perceptions of institutional legitimacy, encouraging greater support for activities like policing among wider society. Equally, representatives within an organisation may actively champion their kinsmen in wider society, preventing state repression.[83]

Military integration programmes thus reflect a significant strand in Western civil-military relations, which views national armies as a tool of identity construction. Since Machiavelli, Western political thinkers have argued that soldiers drawn from among the state's citizenry are more reliable than mercenary cadres isolated from civil life.[84] Following the French Revolution of 1798, at the rebirth of mass democracy, military service became explicitly linked to the rights and obligations of political citizenship through the *levée en masse*. To defend the new political order, the National Convention requisitioned all able bodied Frenchmen aged between 18 and 25 for military service, to create a

[82] Licklider, *op. cit.*, pp 7-9. See also, Florence Gaub, *Military Integration after Civil Wars: Multiethnic Armies, Identity and Post-Conflict Reconstruction* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2011).
[83] Frederick C. Mosher, *Democracy and the Public Service* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1968); Jessica E. Sowa & Sally C. Selden, 'Administrative Discretion and Active Representation: An Expansion of the Theory of Representative Bureaucracy', *Public Administration Review*, 63 (2003), pp. 700–10; Nick A. Theobald & Donald P. Haider-Markel, 'Race, Bureaucracy, and Symbolic Representation: Interactions between Citizens and Police', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 19 (2009), pp. 409–26; Norma M. Riccucci, Gregg G. Van Ryzin & Cecilia F. Lavena, 'Representative Bureaucracy in Policing: Does It Increase Perceived Legitimacy?', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 24:3 (2014), pp. 537-551.
[84] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Peter Bondanella (ed. & trans.), (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005).

"nation-in-arms"; in the words of one member of the National Convention's Committee of Public Safety, 'all the French, both sexes, all ages are called by the nation to defend liberty'.[85] This relationship is at the heart of the idea of the nation-state, and indeed, at the heart of Weber's canonical definition of the state as an entity which claims a 'monopoly of the *legitimate* use of physical force within a given territory.'[86] Subsequently, mass armies were widely imitated because of their military utility, creating an enduring legacy of military service as a "school of the nation"; a "melting pot" through which nation-states are born.[87] The design of military integration programmes therefore mirrors the ideal normative relationship between soldier, state and society that dominated nineteenth-century Europe following the *levée en masse*.

The role of representative national armies as agents for exporting Western civil-military relations equally reflects dominant understandings of non-Western civil-military relations. There remains a dearth of recent civil-military relations theory exploring sub-Saharan Africa, the field having emerged in the 1970s and witnessed a modest re-emergence in the 1990s.[88] Those studies which have been undertaken, together with the significant and growing body of scholarship examining civil-military relations in North Africa and the Middle East, have been significantly preoccupied with coup-proofing. For example, Enloe's classic study *Ethnic Soldiers* noted how ethnically divided states in the region have tended to interpret the loyalty of their citizens through an ethnic lens, which she termed 'ethnic security mapping'. As such, military recruitment policies in these states reflect the political status of groups in relation to the

[85] D. M. G. Sutherland, *The French Revolution and Empire: The Quest for a Civic Order* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2003), p. 182.
[86] Max Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', Lecture to Munich University (1919), online at http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/polisci/ethos/Weber-vocation.pdf, accessed on 07/03/14. Emphasis mine.
[87] See Alan Forrest, *The Legacy of the French Revolutionary Wars: The Nation-in-Arms in French Republican Memory* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009); Donald Stoker, Frederick C. Schneid & Harold D. Blanton (eds.), *Conscription in the Napoleonic Era: A Revolution in Military Affairs?* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2009); Vanda Wilcox, 'Encountering Italy: Military Service and National Identity during the First World War', *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, 3:2 (2011), pp. 283-302.
[88] See for example, Morris Janowitz, *Military Institutions and Coercion in the Developing Nations* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964); Samuel Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa: Studies in Military Style* (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1976); Samuel Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa: Motivations & Constraints* (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1990); Eboe Hutchful & Abdoulaye Bathily, *The Military and Militarism in Africa* (Dakar, CODESRIA, 1998).

dominant conception of national identity.[89] Groups excluded from the national community are either excluded from military service altogether, or are treated as cannon fodder, in a process commonly referred to as "ethnic stacking". Recent studies of ethnic stacking in the Syrian officer corps have suggested that the Syrian military's policy of privileging Shia officers at the expense of Sunni officers, producing a military loyal to the government on sectarian lines, is the principle cause of widespread disaffection and desertion among Sunni servicemen.[90] Such practices frequently undermine the military's ability to defend the state in the most effective way. Key units are retained for internal security duties rather than national defence, security structures are often duplicated to balance against each other, and talent from ethnic out-groups goes unrealised.[91] Moreover, while ethnic stacking is designed to insulate the regime from internal threats, it is also one of the primary causes of coup attempts and civil insurrection from out-groups, who have little recourse but to violence to achieve political recognition or social change.[92] Consequently, Peled considered that building integrated national armies is central to the process of democratic peacebuilding; both by demonstrating the loyalty of social groups, and by preventing unrepresentative security forces from repressing minorities.[93]

In practice, the value of military integration has proved to be more complex. In Afghanistan and Iraq, the absence of a widely-held and transcending national identity meant that the new national armies were only considered legitimate to the extent that sectarian leaders viewed representation in the national army as communally advantageous.[94] In South Sudan, the military integration programme appears to have actually contributed to further instability, by incentivising recalcitrant former rebels to rebel again in the hope

[89] Cynthia H. Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1980).
[90] Hicham Bou Nassif, '"Second-Class": The Grievances of Sunni Officers in the Syrian Armed Forces', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 38:5 (2015), pp. 626-649.
[91] James T. Quinlivan, 'Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East', *International Security*, 24:2 (1999), pp. 131-65.
[92] Philip Roessler, 'The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa', *World Politics*, 63:02 (2011), pp. 300-346.
[93] Alon Peled*, A Question of Loyalty: Military Manpower Policy in Multi-Ethnic States* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1998).
[94] Sven Gunnar Simonsen, 'Leaving Security in Safe Hands: Identity, Legitimacy and Cohesion in the New Afghan and Iraqi Armies', *Third World Quarterly*, 30:8 (2009), p. 1486; Sven Gunnar Simonsen, 'Building "National" Armies – Building Nations? Determinants of Success for Postintervention Integration Efforts', *Armed Forces & Society*, 33:4 (2007), pp. 571-590.

of securing a better deal within the new system.[95] Similarly, a prominent comparative study of military integration under power-sharing found that military integration itself had little impact on the durability of peace; instead it was the power-sharing agreements themselves which determined success.[96] Historically, the ability of national armies to actually reshape competing social and political identities among their soldiery is also debateable. For example, Watson's study of Polish soldiers in the Imperial German Army during the First World War highlighted how the very military institutions regarded as "schools of the nation" have frequently found it difficult to overcome antagonistic social and political norms held by their soldiers. Prior to the Great War, troops raised from the Polish areas of Masuria, Silesia and West Prussia, and Posen were formed into distinct units with regional identities, under the same terms and conditions of service as German troops. However, Poles from these German territories exhibited differing levels of Polish identity, language and nationalism. The assimilated, 'Polish-speaking Germans' from Masuria held the most Germanic identity and politics, and accordingly Watson found that their war service was almost identical to other German soldiers. Silesians, who had a Polish cultural identity but lacked Polish nationalist sentiment, also fought well. In contrast, West Prussian and Posen units, recruited from areas where Polish nationalism was comparatively strong, had comparatively worse combat records and exhibited much higher desertion rates during the war. Concerned at the reliability of Polish-speaking units, German military authorities eventually began posting Polish soldiers individually to German regiments in order to prevent the formation of cohesive, distinctly Polish identities.[97]

Both the importance of military socialisation to producing military behavioural norms, and the competing influence of wider social and political identities in those military norms, is echoed in the traditional literature on military cohesion. Military cohesion is generally defined as the ability of military units to resist disintegration under the pressures of combat. The phenomenon is therefore closely associated with military motivation, or a soldier's will to

[95] Lesley Anne Warner, 'Armed-Group Amnesty and Military Integration in South Sudan', *RUSI Journal*, 158:6 (2013), pp. 40-7.
[96] Katherine Glassmyer & Nicholas Sambanis, 'Rebel-Military Integration and Civil War Termination', *Journal of Peace Research*, 45:3 (2008), pp. 365-84.
[97] Alexander Watson, 'Fighting for Another Fatherland: The Polish Minority in the German Army, 1914–1918', *English Historical Review*, 126:522 (2011), pp. 1137-1166.

continue to fight.[98] Cohesion is thus intrinsically related to combat effectiveness – itself a constituent element of good democratic civil-military relations, and the primary concern of much scholarship on military change and innovation.[99] Indeed, matters of cohesion are frequently described as central to success or failure in war, not just at the tactical level but also at the strategic. For example, the purpose of Napoleonic tactics was 'not to annihilate the enemy, but to send his men reeling to the rear in a complete rout…by undermining the intangible bonds of morale and cohesion which kept men in the ranks'.[100] At least one analyst has similarly described American defeat in Vietnam as a product of the US military's failure to break the cohesion of the North Vietnamese Army.[101]

Academic inquiry into military cohesion largely developed from wartime analysis of the Wehrmacht carried out by Allied sociologists. In 1948, Shils and Janowitz concluded that the tenacious fighting spirit of the German Army was a product of the intimate peer bonds of trust, understanding and common experience that exist between soldiers at the small-unit level, described as "primary group" dynamics. A soldier's will to fight was, therefore, a 'function of the capacity of his immediate primary group (his squad or section) to avoid social disintegration.'[102] The US Army's official historian similarly held that poor American combat performance during the Second World War was attributable to these same dynamics; principally the diminished sense of social responsibility experienced by isolated riflemen using dispersed infantry tactics.[103] Subsequent research attributed combat performance to primary

[98] For a discussion of these definitions, see Guy L. Siebold, Tyler Crabb, Rachel Woodward & Anthony C. King, 'Combat, Cohesion, and Controversy: Disputatio Sine Fine', *Armed Forces & Society* (2015), pp. 449-462.

[99] Owing the difficulty in objectively quantifying combat effectiveness, contemporary armed forces have tended to disaggregate the concept into various constituent elements, including conceptual factors like doctrine and tactics, material considerations, such as equipment and training, and human or morale-based dynamics, including perceived legitimacy, which is principally described in academic sociology as 'cohesion'. See for example, British Army, 'Army Doctrine Publication: Operations', Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (Shrivenham, November, 2010); Matei, 'A New Conceptualisation of Civil-Military Relations', *op. cit.*; Bruneau, 'Efficiency in the Use of Resources', *op. cit.*

[100] Rory Muir, *Tactics and the Experience of Battle in the Age of Napoleon* (New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1998), p. 193.

[101] Colonel William Darryl Henderson, *Cohesion: The Human Element in Combat* (Honolulu, University Press of the Pacific, 1985).

[102] Edward Shils & Morris Janowitz, 'Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 12.2 (1948), pp. 281-3.

[103] S. L. A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command* (Norman, OK, University of Oklahoma Press, 1947), pp. 56-7, pp. 123-33. Marshall claimed that in any given action, no more than 15 per cent of US soldiers actively engaged the enemy. This 'firing ratio' has subsequently been the source of significant controversy, including persistent allegations

group dynamics in cases as wide-ranging as the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the French Revolutionary *Armée du Nord*.[104] The apparent significance of primary group dynamics also led to attempts to quantify cohesion, most prominently in the Platoon Cohesion Index (PCI) developed for the US military, which concluded that shared social bonds – or "social cohesion" – best accounted for units' military performance.[105]

In of itself, however, social cohesion can also impede military performance by providing a basis for deviant solidarity against military authority.[106] While military units were bound together by social cohesion, Shils and Janowitz argued that their utility was underpinned by the interplay between that social solidarity and the wider values and standards of proper military conduct articulated by the military institution and wider society. Thus, social cohesion was harnessed for military purposes by the shared institutional, social and cultural norms of its members, which the pair referred to as "secondary associations". In the Wehrmacht, for example, martial identity was defined by elaborate codes of honour, discipline and reward, which provided a uniformly understood social expectation underpinning primary group interactions.[107] Similarly, historians have noted the relative importance of wider social expectations in defining the role and conduct of military service in some armies. For example, Hughes has highlighted the importance of 'military masculinities' in supporting effective combat performance among Napoleon's armies. While soldiers were promised 'the lure of easy sex' if they fought well, in carrot-and-stick fashion they also had 'to prove their manhood by displaying its qualities

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that he fabricated data. Nevertheless, the ratio has been widely accepted as a truism of combat psychology.

[104] Leonard Wong, Thomas A Kolditz. Raymond A Millen & Terrence M Potter, 'Why They Fight: Combat Motivation in the Iraq War', US Army Strategic Studies Institute (2003); John A. Lynn, *The Bayonets Of The Republic: Motivation and Tactics in the Army of Revolutionary France, 1791-94* (Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1996). For further historical treatment of social cohesion in military organisations, see Edward J. Cross, *All for the King's Shilling: The British Soldier under Wellington, 1808-1814* (Norman, OK, University of Oklahoma Press, 2015); Richard Holmes, *Redcoat: The British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket* (London, Harper Collins, 2001).

[105] Guy L. Siebold & Dennis R. Kelly, 'Development of the Platoon Cohesion Index', US Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences (October 1988); Guy L. Siebold, 'The Essence of Military Group Cohesion', *Armed Forces & Society*, 33:286 (2007), pp. 286-295. See also, J. Griffith, 'Measurement of Group Cohesion in U.S Army Units', *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 9:2 (1988), pp. 158-161.

[106] Patrick Bury, 'Barossa Night: Ritual and Negotiated Order in the British Army Officer Corps', *British Journal of Sociology*, forthcoming.

[107] Shils & Janowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 292-7.

while on campaign and in combat' or risked emasculation.[108] The relationship between military masculinity and wider social values is clear from nineteenth century military texts. The *Soldier's Pocket-Book* of 1871, for example, held that the 'better you dress a soldier, the more highly he will be thought of by women, and consequently by himself'.[109]

The extent to which political ideologies also help to define the military norms underpinning social cohesion has been hotly debated. Shils and Janowitz considered that Nazi ideology mattered relatively little when accounting for Wehrmacht performance on the Western Front, with a small core of politically-motivated officers sufficient to keep units loyal, akin to Huntington's concept of subjective control.[110] This assertion has proved contentious, however. Bartov, for example, argued that Shils and Janowitz's data from prisoners of war on the western front was unrepresentative. Instead, he suggested that the extremely high attrition rates on the eastern front meant that primary groups could not form; instead, units were held together by shared Nazi ideals, accounting for the distinctly ideological character of war in the east.[111] Yet Bartov's analysis of unit attrition rates and their impact has itself been challenged,[112] and studies of other supposedly ideological armies, like those of the First French Republic, have similarly questioned the depth of political sentiment in military motivation.[113] Nonetheless, states have consistently sought to propagate patriotic sentiments among their populations to increase their propensity to mass mobilisation in time of war. In nineteenth-century France and Prussia, governments deliberately propagated nationalist identity for this purpose via schools, public discourse and the media. In a similar fashion, Israeli

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[108] Michael J. Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée: Motivation, Military Culture, and Masculinity in the French Army, 1800-1808* (New York, NY, NYU Press, 2012), p. 109, p. 135.
[109] Sir Garnet Wolseley, *The Soldier's Pocket-Book for Field Service* (London, Macmillan, 1871).
[110] Shils & Janowitz, *op. cit.*, pp. 285-7. Shils & Janowitz argued that most German soldiers were effectively apolitical, such that an hard core of only 10-15 per cent of Nazis (typically officers) was sufficient to ensure the army remained politically aligned. Samuel Stouffer's work on American troops found a parallel lack of overt patriotism among the US GIs the Wehrmacht were fighting. See Samuel A. Stouffer, Arthur A. Lumsdaine, Marion Harper Lumsdaine, Robin M. Williams, Jr., M. Brewster Smith, Irving L. Janis, Shirley A. Star & Leonard S. Cottrell, Jr., *The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1949), p. 110.
[111] Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army: Soldiers, Nazis, and War in the Third Reich* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1992).
[112] See for example, Anthony King, *The Combat Soldier: Infantry Tactics and Cohesion in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 87.
[113] Alan Forrest, *Conscripts and Deserters: The Army and French Society During the Revolution and Empire* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2001).

school children are presented with a vision of military service in the IDF as heroic in order to socialise them to the military's role in society (and indeed, their own role as potential future conscripts).[114] While its role on the battlefield remains contested, recent analysis of wartime conversations between German prisoners of war recorded covertly by Allied intelligence agencies indicate that Nazi ideology undoubtedly accounted for the relative ease many German soldiers felt about war crimes.[115] As Murray concluded, it appears that military cultures have historically been partly the product of 'the *Weltanschauung* of the external society'.[116]

Accordingly, Krebs has rejected the entire concept of integrated national armies as "schools of the nation". Examining the politics of military service in India, Israel and the United States, Krebs found that socially representative armed forces did not develop as a matter of course, but as a result of changes in the wider social and political conception of citizenship. As such, national armies – both by definition and by historical experience – reflect pre-existing social and political constructions of national identity. In short, national armies do not build nations; rather, nations build national armies. When military recruitment policies have changed, the army merely acts as a conduit for wider political discourse.[117] As a corollary of this, Krebs consequently dismisses the value of national armies in peacebuilding, arguing that military integration and similar military organisational changes have relatively little impact on the cultural or behavioural norms of military institutions or their individual soldiers.[118] He compares military integration programmes to 'an endangered and expensive African parrot' whose only use is to warn the miners working at the coal-face of reconstruction that peace is dead through its collapse. While this in itself may have utility, there are other cheaper 'canaries' in the peace-builders' tool-kit. Accordingly, Krebs finds that attributing the problems of peace-building to failures in military integration 'is a bit like saying the dead canary is at fault for

[114] Barry R. Posen, 'Nationalism, the Mass Army, and Military Power', *International Security*, 18:2 (1993), pp. 80-124; Mirta Furman, 'Army and War: Collective Narratives of Early Childhood in Contemporary Israel', in Lomsky-Feder & Ben-Ari, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-168.
[115] Sonke Neitzel & Harald Welzer, *Soldaten: On Fighting, Killing and Dying* (London, Simon & Schuster,2012).
[116] Murray, 'Does Military Culture Matter?', *op. cit.*, pp. 28-9.
[117] Ronald R. Krebs, 'One Nation under Arms? Military Participation Policy and the Politics of Identity', *Security Studies*, 14:3 (2005), pp. 535-6.
[118] Ronald R. Krebs, 'A School for the Nation? How Military Service Does Not Build Nations, and How It Might', *International Security*, 28:4 (2004), p. 120.

the coal mine's having become uninhabitable', when in fact, 'it is the noxious fumes that are dangerous, to canaries and coal miners alike.'[119]

If the military's own socialisation and cohesion-generating processes are partially reliant on wider societal norms, this might account for their resilience to change, and the difficulty external interventionists have in reshaping them. Moreover, diverse attitudes towards army and state among wider society may threaten the production of cohesive military norms altogether, explaining the less than successful record of military integration in reshaping civil-military relations. However, this conclusion is not fully borne out in the experience of military socialisation in contemporary Western armies which recruit from diverse social groups. Examining the identity forming processes within the IDF Paratroop and Golani brigades, Kachtan concluded that the 'people's army' nature of IDF conscription did serve to reinforce existing social hierarchies evident in the wider Israeli polity. Although both brigades are open to soldiers of all backgrounds, the elite nature of the Paratroops resulted in modes of dress, culture, music and attitude commensurate with socio-economically superior Ashkenazim (Westernised Jewish) practice. In contrast, Golani soldiers privileged Mizrahi (middle-eastern Jewish) traits associated with Israeli counter-culture.[120] It is evident that some socio-ethnic characteristics have had more political saliency than others. Despite operational effectiveness requiring a degree of *lingua franca*, language differences are typically less of a challenge to military orthodoxies than ethnicity, in part because they are not considered zero-sum or immutable. Nonetheless, it would appear from the case of Arabic-speaking IDF soldiers, that where language becomes associated with ethnicity it acquires similar political saliency.[121]

While Katchan found that the IDF's socialisation processes in the Paratroop and Golani brigades harnessed external social constructs for military purposes, in both organisations *all* soldiers adopted the dominant norms

[119] Ronald R. Krebs, 'Military Dis-Integration: Canary in the Coal Mine?', in Roy Licklider (ed.), *New Armies from Old: Merging Competing Military Forces after Civil War* (Washington, DC, 2014), pp. 245-56.
[120] Dana Kachtan, 'The Construction of Ethnic Identity in the Military - From the Bottom Up', *Israel Studies*, 17:3 (2012), pp. 150-175.
[121] Alon Peled, 'The Politics of Language in Multi-Ethnic Militaries: The Case of Oriental Jews in the Israel Defence Forces, 1950-1959', *Armed Forces and Society*, 26:4 (2000), pp. 587-605.

regardless of their prior socio-ethnic background.[122] Similarly, the experience of Multinational Peace Support Operations has shown that military contingents composed of diverse officers can function effectively together.[123] Such observations have begun to challenge the importance of social cohesion and with it wider societal and political identities, in shaping military norms. Recent developments in the study of military cohesion have highlighted how Western armies have become increasingly able to incorporate diverse social and ethnic groups without fragmentation or reduced effectiveness, as they have professionalised. During the Al-Aqsa Intifada, for example, the IDF's tactical successes were reliant on the flexible re-grouping of units to form ad hoc composites around key weapon systems. Here, troops were thrown together with little prior familiarity, precluding social cohesion and primary group dynamics. Instead, their interactions were underpinned by 'swift trust', generated by common training, doctrine and goals – by a *professional* form of military socialisation.[124] Likewise, despite indications in the PCI study that social cohesion defines performance, Siebold subsequently found that racial and ethnicity diversity had no impact on US infantrymen's cohesion or performance.[125]

These observations have given rise to the concept of "task cohesion" to explain the apparently new form of cohesion which has developed in professionalised armies, largely since the Second World War. Much of the early literature on task cohesion imported management and business concepts into defence in an explicit attempt to challenge the US military's 'don't ask, don't tell' policy.[126] However, like with early primary group theory and interest in military

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[122] Kachtan, *op. cit.*

[123] Efrat Elron, Boas Shamir, & Eyal Ben-Ari, 'Why Don't They Fight Each Other? Cultural Diversity and Operational Unity in Multinational Forces', *Armed Forces & Society*, 26.1 (1999), pp. 73-97.

[124] Uzi Ben-Shalom, Zeev Lerer, & Eyal Ben-Ari, 'Cohesion During Military Operations: A Field Study on Combat Units in the Al-Aqsa Intifada', *Armed Forces &* Society, 32.1 (2005), pp. 63-79; Ariel Vainer, Eyal Ben-Ari, Uzi Ben-Shalom, & Zeev Lerer, *Rethinking Contemporary Warfare: A Sociological View of the Al-Aqsa Intifada* (Albany, NY, State University of New York Press, 2010).

[125] Guy L. Siebold & Twila J. Lindsay, 'The Relationship Between Demographic Descriptors and Soldier-Perceived Cohesion and Motivation', *Military Psychology*, 11:1 (1999), pp. 109-28.

[126] See for example, Stephen B. Knouse, Alvin & Patricia Smith, 'Keeping "On Task": An Exploration of Task Cohesion in Diverse Military Teams', Defence Equal Opportunity Management Institute (1998). Subsequent debate became protracted and acrimonious, and descended into methodological name-calling. See Wong et al, 'Why They Fight', *op. cit.*; Robert J. MacCoun, Elizabeth Kier & Aaron Belkin, 'Does Social Cohesion Determine Motivation in Combat? An Old Question with an Old Answer', *Armed Forces & Society*, 32:1 (2005), pp. 648-

adaptation, the maturation of task cohesion was promoted by observable discrepancies in military performance. As King persuasively observed:

> 'the Argentine Army in the Falklands did not fail because there were no primary groups…The Argentines were defeated because they were incapable of conducting effective collective drills…either of maneuvering against or of generating sufficient collective firepower from their defensive positions to stop the British advance.'[127]

Consequently, King found that small-unit effectiveness in modern combat units was a product of shared procedures of communication and activity, imparted through extensive and continuous collective training. In contemporary Western armies, these processes produce a common understanding of the group's task among soldiers, but also impose specific responsibilities on individuals within the group, becoming the bedrock of both cohesion and effectiveness.[128] In *The Combat Soldier*, King traced the historical relationship between cohesion and combat effectiveness through the development of modern infantry tactics. Through particular reference to the British military experience, King argued that the mass citizen armies in the First and Second World Wars retained a pre-modern tactical reliance on mass, or weight of numbers, despite the conceptual development (and limited employment) of more complex tactics based on fire and manoeuvre. Citizen soldiers were unable to fully embrace a professional military identity, while armies were logistically unable to provide the requisite training and education at such a scale. King shows how the professionalization of military organisations allowed for a greater emphasis on professional identity and skills, largely achieved through extensive training, which acted as the

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51; Thomas A. Kolditz, 'Research in In Extremis Settings: Expanding the Critique of "Why They Fight"', *Armed Forces & Society*, 32:4 (2006), pp. 655-658, Leonard Wong, 'Combat Motivation in Today's Soldiers', *Armed Forces & Society*, 32:4 (2006), pp. 659-663. This row prompted Krebs to presciently observe that 'the heart of the debate over gays and lesbians serving in the U.S. military…lies less some careful calculus of costs and benefits to the effectiveness of U.S. fighting forces, than fears and hopes regarding what military inclusion and exclusion would mean for the status of homosexuals in the larger society' (Krebs, 'A School for the Nation?', *op. cit.*, p. 89). Interestingly, cohesion had previously served the battleground of choice for advocates and opponents of the US Army's All Volunteer Force model; Henderson's work on cohesion (*op. cit.*) being essentially a polemic on these lines. Recently, academic study of military cohesion has similarly become the vehicle for debate over the inclusion of women in Western militaries' combat arms. See for example, King, *Combat Soldier*, *op. cit.*; Connie Brownson, 'The Battle for Equivalency: Female US Marines Discuss Sexuality, Physical Fitness, and Military Leadership', *Armed Forces & Society*, 40:4 (2014), pp. 765-788; Anthony King, 'Women Warriors: Female Accession to Ground Combat', *Armed Forces & Society*, 41:2 (2015), pp. 379-387; Connie Brownson, 'Rejecting Patriarchy for Equivalence in the US Military: A Response to Anthony King's "Women Warriors: Female Accession to Ground Combat"', *Armed Forces & Society*, 42 (2016), pp. 235-242.

[127] Anthony King, 'The Word of Command: Communication and Cohesion in the Military', *Armed Forces & Society*, 32:4 (2006), p. 495.

[128] *Ibid.*, pp. 496-504.

necessary precursor to tactical sophistication. Thus, the process of professionalization appears to have reduced the salience of social norms in military cohesion and replaced them with new, distinctly military culture.[129]

While citizen armies relied on heroic leadership, punitive and sometimes corporal discipline, and wider social constructs like patriotism or masculinity to motivate their troops, the discipline, performance and loyalty of professional armed forces are underpinned by distinctly self-referential norms. In this vein, modern Western armed forces increasingly incorporate social diversity in ways impossible for their citizen soldier forbears.[130] Perhaps counter-intuitively, it was the strength of this professional military culture in the British Army which King used to explain the inappropriate operational decisions it took in Helmand, just as it accounts for the modern British Army's superior tactical prowess.[131] However, the significance of professional military culture is in its relationship to task cohesion, and thus the ability (in potentia at least) to reshape military norms through institutional change in socialising processes like training and education. Indeed, the importance of training in developing task-based professional norms is evidenced by the presence of both societally-motivated (i.e. unprofessional) and task-based (i.e. professional) military units in the same army at the same time. For example, Geyer has highlighted how the tactical combat training adopted by certain elements of the German Army during the First World War led to radically improved military performance. This new way of war emphasised manoeuvre and mutual support, and was reliant on new forms of tactical training developed through wartime adaptation. In practice, it created highly motivated soldiers who understood the importance of their own agency to the unit's wider tactical success, and their collective survival. Geyer subsequently concluded that the shift to more manoeuvreist principles of war created uniquely lethal units, in which both tactical practice and military cohesion were underpinned by rigorous combat training.[132]

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[129] King, *Combat Soldier, op. cit.*; Anthony King, 'On Cohesion', in King, *Frontline*, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-23.

[130] King, *The Combat Soldier, op. cit.*; King, 'Discipline and Punish', *op. cit.*; Garth Pratten, 'New Model Diggers: Australian Identity, Motivation and Cohesion in Afghanistan', in King, *Frontline*, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-199; Sundberg, *op. cit.*

[131] King, 'Understanding the Helmand Campaign', *op. cit.*

[132] Michael Geyer, 'How the Germans Learned to Wage War: On the Question of Killing in the First and Second World Wars', in Alon Confino, Paul Betts & Dirk Schumann (eds.), *Between Mass death and Individual Loss: The Place of the Dead in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New

While professionalization may offer a better route to normative civil-military change than military integration alone, historical processes of professionalization in Western armies were conducted over long periods of time. Professional Western armies only came to full maturation following the ending of the Cold War, as Western military establishments finally abandoned mass citizen armies. Moreover, though undoubtedly stimulated by external events, these processes were not solely driven by external actors; nor should they be seen as inevitable trends towards progress.[133] However, the socialising elements of this process appear to account for those successes witnessed by military integration and military democratisation programmes. Following the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, for instance, the Rwanda Defence Force was rebuilt by integrating various guerrilla and revolutionary organisations of both Tutsi and Hutu origins. Jowell described how the integration processes utilised concepts of liberation and tradition to create a new identity for the force, which was subsequently cemented by meritocratic modernisation drives, military re-education programmes, and the visceral experience of subsequent peacekeeping operations. Central to propagating the force's new integrated identity was a political re-education process called *Ingando*, which included classes on national identity and history alongside technical military education.[134]

In a similar fashion, even those scholars of civil-military relations who overtly reject the tautology of Huntingtonian professionalism consider professional military education (PME) essential to remaking military norms. Bruneau, for instance, argued that the reform of US PME following the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act significantly accounts for the promotion of a new "joint" culture of multi-service co-operation in US military operations, which the US armed services had previously resisted.[135] The impact

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York, NY, Berghahn, 2008), pp. 25-50. See also Bruce I. Gudmundsson, *Stormtroop Tactics: Innovation in the German Army, 1914-1918* (Westport, CT, Praeger, 1989).

[133] See for example, Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams & David R. Segal, *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000); Anthony Clayton, *The British Officer: Leading the Army from 1660 to the Present* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2006); King, *Combat Soldier*, *op. cit.*

[134] Marco Jowell, 'Cohesion Through Socialization: Liberation, Tradition and Modernity in the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF)', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 8:2 (2014), pp. 278-93. Jowell concedes that the RDF is also actively monitored for signs of dissent by the Rwandan government, which is believed to make extensive use of its security services to extra-judicially assassinate recalcitrant military officers.

[135] Thomas C. Bruneau, 'Reforms in Professional Military Education: The United States', in Bruneau & Matei, *op. cit.*, pp. 193-203. See also, Murray, 'Does Military Culture Matter?', *op. cit.*, pp. 35-42.

of PME in reshaping civil-military norms has also been noted as an important component of military democratisation programmes in cases as wide ranging as Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Chile.[136]

IMATT and the RSLAF: Normative Military Change driven from Without?

SSR is a fundamentally normative undertaking, aiming to export Western norms of democratic civil-military relations to underpin stability and transitional democracy overseas. Central to effective civilian control of the armed forces is the recognition that the military itself must accept this prospect. Exporting democratic civil-military relations is thus a problem of exporting a particular set of military norms – of changing local military culture. However, relatively little theoretical understanding exists about the process of externally-led military change. Historically, interventionists have typically engaged in such processes as much for their own benefit as that of the recipient.[137] As often as not, successful extraneous military change appears historically to have been the product of processes of strategic emulation, in which foreign military models were imported using foreign advisors at the behest of the recipient.[138] If recipient as well as donor actively perceived change as desirable and eagerly pursued it, then the extent to which such changes were genuinely imposed from without must be seriously questioned. Moreover, the fact that historical examples largely focused on improving local military capacity and capability means such cases only tangentially addressed local military and political cultures.

Even in the scholarship on Western military innovation, there is little clarity as to the relationship between the military's cultural norms and military change. On the one hand, military norms appear to shape the prospects for military change, either by impelling it – as in Farrell's study of the interwar Irish army – or precluding certain changes in favour of others – as in Kier's study of

[136] Florina Cristiana Matei, 'Civilian Influences in Defense: Slovenia', in Bruneau & Matei, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-66; Florina Cristiana Matei & José A. Olmeda, 'Executive Civilian Control of the Military: Spain', in *ibid.*, pp. 181-90; Florina Cristiana Matei & Marcos Robledo, 'Democratic Civilian Control and Military effectiveness: Chile', in *ibid.*, pp. 283-295; Florina Cristiana Matei, 'NATO, the Demand for Democratic Control, and Military Effectiveness: Romania', in *ibid.*, pp. 318-330.
[137] Donald Stoker, 'The History and Evolution of Foreign Military Advising and Assistance, 1815–2007', in Stoker, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-10.
[138] Goldman, *op. cit.*, Sater, *op. cit.*, Dunn, *op. cit.*

the interwar British and French armed forces.[139] Yet as Griffin has argued, the explanatory power of military culture in explaining military change remains unclear. Typically, it has been viewed as a medium which filters other imperatives for military reform; be they civil-military interactions, inter- or intra-service rivalries, or the adaptive pressures of combat.[140] Accordingly, in a rare study of externally-led military change Grissom concluded that, insulated from adaptive imperatives by ISAF, Afghan political and military cultural norms subverted extraneous military innovations, resulting in failed military change.[141]

Although recent re-examination of military adaptation and its limitations have highlighted the susceptibility of even functional imperatives to pre-existing military norms, serving to re-emphasise the importance of organisational cultures in conditioning change, these have only obliquely hinted at the prospect of reshaping military norms – largely through an *absence* of institutional change rather than its operation.[142] Observers of national army building and liberal intervention have remained sceptical as to the political impact the institutional reform of local armed forces by outsiders can have. Krebs, for example, dismissed military integration programmes as an attempt to put the cart before the horse – inherently flawed by the mistaken assumption that national armies can build nations by reshaping their soldiers' identities, and with it, wider society, whereas, in fact, it is nations that build national armies.[143] Certainly, empirical studies of military integration demonstrate its troubled record.[144] In short, military and political cultures have been typically shown to shape military change rather than the other way round.

Yet the processes of military socialisation, which propagate military norms and help construct organisational culture, are eminently changeable through institutional reform or adaptive adjustment. Indeed, the concept of doctrine is premised upon this very ability. Moreover, there are some examples in which military change does appear to have reshaped military behavioural

[139] Farrell, 'World Culture and the Irish Army', *op. cit.*; Kier, *op. cit.*
[140] Griffin, 'Military Innovation Studies', *op. cit.*
[141] Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars', *op. cit.*
[142] Catignani, '"Getting COIN"', *op. cit.*; Catignani, 'Coping with Knowledge', *op. cit.*; King, 'Understanding the Helmand Campaign', *op. cit.*
[143] Krebs, 'One Nation under Arms?', *op. cit.*; Krebs, 'A School for the Nation?', *op. cit.*; Krebs, 'Military Dis-Integration', *op. cit.*
[144] Warner, *op. cit.*; Glassmyer & Sambanis, *op. cit.*

norms.[145] In Canada, the replacement of senior commanders with a younger generation possessing a different military culture precipitated institutional reform and facilitated tactical adaptation.[146] Equally, in Rwanda, a successful military integration programme was largely underpinned by the *Ingando* military re-education scheme, supported by accompanying institutional reforms.[147] Thus, adherents of civil-military relations have highlighted the role of PME in shaping military values.[148] The growing body of literature of military task cohesion similarly demonstrates how processes of military professionalisation – inherently liked to institutional reform, training and socialisation – have radically reshaped the norms of Western military culture, improving tactical military effectiveness. At the same time, these processes have replaced the salience of societal and political values in motivating soldiers with new, professional and career based norms, reshaping military discipline and social dynamics alongside improved tactical praxis.[149]

How external interventionists might successfully use military change to reshape local military cultures and behavioural norms, however, remains unclear. How do external interventionists stimulate local military institutional changes? Is this achieved through the exploitation of civil-military dynamics, or through intra-service rivalries? Does successful extraneous military change stem from pre-existing intra-service tensions, exploited by externals, or from externally-led adaptation? Can external interventionists use military change to force a normative shift in local armed forces, or does such local military change only result from emulative desires already harboured by the recipients of foreign training missions? In answering these questions, this thesis seeks to inform policy approaches to intervention, such as SSR and MCB, by improving the state of practical knowledge on externally-led military change. It will directly contribute to the corpus of scholarship on military change and innovation by advancing our theoretical understanding of military cultural change, which in the current literature remains somewhat disparate. Understanding whether external interventionists carrying out SSR can successfully reshape local military norms

[145] See Farrell & Terriff, *op. cit.*
[146] Saideman, *op. cit.*
[147] Jowell, *op. cit.*
[148] Bruneau & Matei, *op. cit.*
[149] King, 'The Word of Command', *op. cit.*; King, *Combat Soldier, op. cit.*; King, *Frontline*, *op. cit.*; Ben-Shalom, Lerer & Ben-Ari, *op. cit.*; Vainer, Ben-Ari, Ben-Shalom, & Lerer, *op. cit.*

has potentially profound implications for our understanding of the relative importance of military culture in military change. If military culture can be reshaped by external interventionists, then this helps us to understand whether change causes culture, or culture causes change, or indeed, both.

Ostensibly at least, IMATT succeeded in changing the military norms of the RSLAF following British intervention in Sierra Leone. Prior to British intervention, the Sierra Leonean military was not under civilian control, having attempted a series of military coups, periodically overthrowing civilian regimes to establish (often short-lived) military juntas. Moreover, the military was not particularly effective either. During the country's decade-long civil war, it proved unequal to the challenge of counter-insurgency, atrophying and gradually disintegrating as a result. A little over a decade after British intervention, the rebuilt RSLAF appeared to be firmly supportive of civilian democratic governance. Sierra Leone had witnessed three democratic elections, including one largely peaceful transition of power. Not only did the military not intervene politically during these electoral cycles, as it had done previously, it actively supported the conduct of democracy through the provision of logistical and security support. Equally, the RSLAF had begun to display an increased level of military capacity, first deploying a company and then a battalion on international peacekeeping operations.[150] The case of IMATT's relatively successful reform of the RSLAF thus provides a window onto the process of building other people's armies – and with it, an insight into the dynamic interplay between external and internal drivers of military change, and more fundamentally, the complex relationship between the norms of military culture and military change.

[150] Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007* (Birmingham, GFN-SSR, 2009); Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone 1997-2013: Defence, Diplomacy and Development in Action* (London, Routledge, 2014); Peter Albrecht & Cathy Haenlein, 'Sierra Leone's Post-Conflict Peacekeepers', *RUSI Journal*, 160:1 (2015), pp. 26-36.

4. Patrimonial Politics and Civil-Military Relations in Sierra Leone: From Colony to Rebel War

Classic Western civil-military thought has tended to view the armed forces as a distinct entity, separate from civil society and political life. While this attitude is in many respects an ideal-type, epitomised by Huntington's much-criticised idea of objective civilian control, it nonetheless remains resonant.[1] Indeed, many scholars have argued that the professionalization of Western armed forces since the fall of the Berlin Wall has increasingly separated Western military identities from civil society.[2] Boëne, for example, held that so-called post-modern armed forces enjoy a 'status as "a tribe among tribes" [which] allows a much greater deal of divergence from increasingly uncertain cultural mainstreams',[3] although the political implications of such a "gap" remain contested.[4] Yet, in much of the non-Western world, it is far from clear that any political space separating the military from political discourse exists at all, let alone the kind of social space articulated by post-modern military concepts. The armed forces of Fiji, Pakistan and Uganda, for instance, have all developed distinct military identities akin to a "military ethnicity" – or a tribe within the tribe, to use Boëne's language – yet these identities appear to have frequently intersected with specific ethnic identities in wider society, undermining both nascent democracy and supra-ethnic national identities.[5] Arguably, the perceived need to import Western civil-military concepts into Sierra Leone was a direct response to the erosion of distinct and separate military institutions in

[1] Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1957); Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York, NY, The Free Press, 1960); though offering a strong critique of *The Soldier and the State*, Huntington's also ideas form the central pre-occupation of Bruneau's work on civil-military relations. See Thomas C. Bruneau & Florina Cristiana Matei (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2013).

[2] Anthony King, *The Combat Soldier: Infantry Tactics and Cohesion in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013); Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams & David R. Segal, *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000).

[3] Bernard Boëne, 'The Military as a Tribe Among Tribes: Postmodern Armed Forces and Civil-Military Relations?', in Giuseppe Caforio (ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military* (New York, NY, Springer, 2006), p. 184.

[4] As does its existence. See Hew Strachan, 'The Civil-military "Gap" in Britain', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 26:2 (2003), pp. 43-63.

[5] Daniel Zirker, Constantine P. Danopoulos & Alan Simpson, 'The Military as a Distinct Ethnic or Quasi-Ethnic Identity in Developing Countries', *Armed Forces & Society*, 34:2 (2008), pp. 314-37.

the period following independence, and the concomitant impact this had on Sierra Leonean military culture.

This chapter examines civil-military relations in Sierra Leone, from colonial independence in 1961 to British military intervention in 2000. The patterns of civil-military relations seen during this period had a dramatic impact on the institutional fabric of the Sierra Leonean armed forces, and consequently came to shape the internal culture of the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF). This culture defined later wartime military behaviour, ultimately leading to British military intervention. Thus, understanding the nature and impact of civil-military relations prior to intervention is vital to understanding later internationally-directed military change. Moreover, the relationship between pre-war civil-military relations and the development of military culture in Sierra Leone helps explain the centrality of military cultural change to later peacebuilding efforts. This chapter first examines the concepts of patrimonialism and neo-patrimonialism, their prevailing features in Sierra Leonean history, and their utility for understanding Sierra Leonean political economy. It then turns to the history of civil-military relations in Sierra Leone from independence to the outbreak of war, examining the extent to which neo-patrimonial practices can account for its pertinent trends. Countervailing explanations of the causes of the Sierra Leonean civil war are briefly examined, before the chapter turns to the behaviour of Sierra Leone's armed forces during the conflict. Here, two prominent periods of military rule are examined as windows onto the cultural attitudes of the wartime RSLMF, and their impact on civil-military relations and military-institutional collapse. The chapter concludes that both military culture and civil-military relations in Sierra Leone before intervention cannot be understood without reference to the neo-patrimonial character of Sierra Leonean political society.

Establishing the nature civil-military relations in Sierra Leone is particularly important, as neo-patrimonialism forms a central feature of scholarly arguments about liberal peacebuilding and military change more broadly. The civil war in Sierra Leone, known locally and henceforth as the Rebel War, was punctuated by extraordinary acts of violence against the civilian population. The main rebel group, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), developed a particular reputation for barbarism and ruthlessness, to the extent that the Rebel War

became the centre-piece for arguments extolling the intrinsic barbarism and primitivism of African society prevalent in the 1990s. The Rebel War formed the central case study of Kaplan's influential essay, 'The Coming Anarchy', which presented a vision of neo-Malthusian collapse defined by greed, environmental degradation, primitivism and irrational violence. Kaplan's arguments proved extraordinarily persuasive – particularly in the United States, which faxed a copy to all its African embassies – and tapped into wider fears about post-Soviet small wars and a "crisis of civilisation".[6] Though Kaplan's thesis was widely debunked by scholars at the time and since, the international community's response to state collapse in Sierra Leone was largely one of institutional state-building on a Western model.[7] While Kaplan's 'new barbarism' explanation did not ultimately prove persuasive, the underlying social and political trends which led to such a dramatic unravelling of the prevailing political order in Sierra Leone are nonetheless important, as they shaped later international responses.

In place of the 'new barbarism' argument, scholars have instead highlighted the imperfect nature of state institutions on decolonisation, and the pervasive and pernicious impact of patrimonial social and political processes on formal state institutions.[8] Not only do such practices undermine the capacity of formal government, exposing the contradictory social contracts on which it is built, but they also shape the nature of civil-military relations. Studies of defence reform in other patrimonial societies have repeatedly argued that neo-patrimonial dynamics shape the behaviour and preferences of local actors, with potentially dramatic implications for military effectiveness, accountability to democratic order, and externally-led reform. In Afghanistan, Grissom argued that the limited success witnessed in Western-led capacity building in the ANA

[6] Robert D. Kaplan, 'The Coming Anarchy: How Scarcity, Crime, Overpopulation, Tribalism, and Disease are Rapidly Destroying the Social Fabric of our Planet', *The Atlantic Monthly*, (February 1994); Mary Kaldor, *New & Old Wars; Organised Violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1999); for further discussion see Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth and Resources in Sierra Leone* (Oxford, James Currey, 2008), p. xv.

[7] For rejections of Kaplan's ideas, see Patrick Chabal & Jean-Pascal Daloz, A*frica Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument* (Oxford, James Currey, 1999); Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, *op. cit*.; Krijn Peters, *War and the Crisis of youth in Sierra Leone* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011).

[8] Chabal & Daloz, *op. cit.*; David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (Oxford, James Currey, 2005); Morten Bøås & Kevin Dunn (eds.), *African Guerrillas: Raging against the Machine* (Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner, 2007).

could be attributed to neo-patrimonial dynamics.[9] Marten similarly found that the limited advances in Afghan civil-military relations were largely caused by warlordism and similar neo-patrimonial influences, but concluded that incremental progress might yet yield results.[10] More broadly, Cleary found that the inherent differences between the assumptions implicit in Western civil-military relations and the realities of how political power is exercised in non-Western contexts like neo-patrimonialism, has limited the scope for exporting democratic civil-military norms.[11] In Sierra Leone, clientelism and coup-proofing appear to have undermined the military as distinct institution, shaping military culture in line with fractious political identities, and concomitantly impoverishing military effectiveness during the Rebel War. Exacerbated by the pressures of war, this eventually resulted in the virtual collapse of the military as an organisation. Consequently, understanding the RSLMF's pre-war military culture, and how it developed, is vital to any analysis of post-intervention military changes aimed at reshaping it.

Patrimonialism in Sierra Leonean Society and Politics

In common with neighbouring states in Mano River Basin area, the exercise of political power in Sierra Leone has been traditionally characterised by patrimonialism. In a patrimonial system, 'the essence of politics is [the] distribution of scarce resources'.[12] This distribution occurs between patrons and clients, or "big men" and "smaller men", in a transactional fashion. Big men disburse resources in order to buy the support of individuals, whose loyalty can then be leveraged for personal projects – be they political, military or business related. In return, smaller men, who become "for" the bigger man, look to their patrons for support and protection against other big men.[13] As such, politics in patrimonial systems is not driven by ideological or national desires, but to

[9] Adam Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars: NATO Advisors and Military Adaptation in the Afghan National Army, 2001-2011', in Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga & James A. Russell (eds.), *Military Adaptation in Afghanistan* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 263-87.
[10] Kimberly Marten, 'Patronage Versus Professionalism in New Security Institutions', *PRISM*, 2:4 (2011), pp. 83-98.
[11] Laura R. Cleary, 'Lost in Translation: The Challenge of Exporting Models of Civil-Military Relations', *PRISM*, 3:2 (2012), pp. 19-36.
[12] Morten Bøås, 'Liberia and Sierra Leone: Dead Ringers? The Logic of Neopatrimonial Rule', *Third World Quarterly*, 22:5 (2001), p. 698.
[13] Magnus Jörgel & Mats Utas, 'The Mano River Basin Area: Formal and Informal Security Providers in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone', Swedish Defence Research Agency (Stockholm, 2007), pp. 6-15.

ensure the welfare of one's own group.[14] Relative power is attained through control of the resources required to maintain a big man's network of dependents, and by expanding that network, thus increasing the number of smaller men who may be leveraged in support of the big man's projects or the network's maintenance. These networks of big men and smaller men are in constant flux, and there is nothing innately fixed about the transactional relationships between members of the network. A big man may himself owe allegiance to one or more bigger men, and followers may simultaneously have several big men, or move between them, depending on circumstance. These interactions thus become complex and opaque, visible primarily by the exercise of power through the network.[15] Grissom refers to this patrimonial system as a 'limited access order', in which established patrimonial networks compete with each other for resources and power, while tacitly collaborating to prevent newcomers' access to resources, networks and upward mobility. Where such networks effectively counter-balance each other, such systems can provide a degree of political stability, with inter-network competition conducted via criminality and petty lawlessness rather than open political dispute.[16]

In a patrimonial system, the relationships between big men and smaller men render political power intrinsically personal. Political power is not abstract, tied to particular offices as in a legal-rational Weberian state, but is based on the personal power of a big man and his network. Thus, there becomes no clear differentiation between the public and private space in patrimonial systems.[17] As Richards noted, 'Patrimonialism is a systematic scaling up, at the national level, of local ideas about…the duty of the rich and successful to protect, support and promote their followers and friends'.[18] Equally, political power becomes fundamentally economic, and the conduct of politics a business, because it is primarily the resources required to maintain a network which define political power. In reciprocal fashion, political capital thus provides access to economic resources. In this way, competition in patrimonial systems fundamentally seeks to control the state and its institutions, as these provide the best means of

[14] Bøås, *op. cit.*, p. 699.
[15] Jörgel & Utas, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-15; Bøås, *op. cit.*, pp. 697-701; Danny Hoffman, 'The Meaning of a Militia: Understanding the Civil Defence Forces of Sierra Leone', *African Affairs*, 106:425 (October 2007), pp. 639–662.
[16] Grissom, *op. cit.*, pp. 276-9.
[17] Chabal & Daloz, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-16; Bøås, *op. cit.*, pp. 700-1.
[18] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-7.

controlling access to resources.[19] However, in Sierra Leone as in many other post-colonial societies, the formal state retains a degree of bureaucratic structure and process separate from the patrimonial networks of big men. These societies have been described as "neo-patrimonial", in which both bureaucratic and patrimonial logics of power coexist. Ultimately though, the intersection of these two systems results in the hollowing-out of state institutions, which are both maintained and ransacked to support the patrimonial "shadow state".[20] According to some estimates, up to 80 per cent of power structures in the Mano River Basin region are informal or patrimonial, ultimately controlling the granting of concessions or salaried positions in the formal state. Accordingly, a number of scholars have argued that the informal shadow state and its opaque, patrimonial networks of big men and their followers actually give form and substance to the visible, formal state, which exists largely to provide the pretence of legitimacy – particularly to western aid donors.[21]

In Sierra Leone, familial – and therefore by extension ethnic – association forms the primary basis of patrimonial networks. According to Sierra Leone's 2004 census, there are 16 major non-European ethnic groups resident in Sierra Leone, and over 19 languages spoken. However, the country is effectively divided into three ethno-linguistic blocs, commonly known as the Temne, Mende (or Mande) and Krio peoples. The Temne compose around 31 per cent of the population and are concentrated in the north of the country, while the Mende form 32 per cent of the population, and are focused in the south and east. The capital Freetown, however, is predominantly populated by Creole, or 'Krio' speaking people, descended from various freed-slave groups which founded the original British colony of Sierra Leone. Historically, the Creole population have exercised a disproportionate influence in the country's affairs in comparison to their modest 1.2 per cent share of population; largely due to their dominance of the capital and associated access to better education.[22] Despite these defined blocs, the plethora of ethnic and linguistic identities (and the high levels of inter-marriage between them) have historically

[19] Bøås, *op. cit.*, pp. 700-1; Grissom, *op. cit.*, p. 277-8.
[20] Bøås, *op. cit.*, p. 700; Chabal & Daloz, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-16.
[21] Jörgel & Utas, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
[22] Armand C. Thomas, '2004 Population and Housing Census of Sierra Leone: Population Profile of Sierra Leone', Sierra Leone Union for Population Studies (Freetown, October 2007), pp. 54-7; Colonel Mike Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief 2002', IMATT internal briefing document (Shrewsbury, 24 July 2002), p. 4.

meant that ethnic identity is somewhat fluid. Traditionally, individuals have sought to emphasise different elements of their nested social and ethnic identity at different times, depending on audience and convenience, facilitating the development of (and competition between) patrimonial networks.[23]

Patrimonialism defined pre-colonial tribal power structures in Sierra Leone, but was co-opted by the expanding colonial state as a politically expedient means of maintaining imperial authority. Although British-style 'Freetown law' was maintained in the capital, colonial authorities largely exercised control over the Sierra Leonean hinterland via native chiefs, who served as intermediaries between traditional patrimonial systems and the growing formal colonial state.[24] As British imperial influence spread to the interior of the country, it served to entrench the patrimonial system of tribal power which had always existed, making networks and class divisions more rigid and less open.[25] Under this system of indirect rule, the British colonial administration established the institution of Paramount Chieftaincy. Paramount Chiefs were permitted to govern the population according to customary law, and in turn Paramount Chiefs generated significant private revenue from emoluments, tribal labour, and from 1937 a salary from the colonial government. However, the British maintained tight control over the office of Paramount Chieftaincy, and both the boundaries of chiefly administrative divisions and rules of inheritance were defined by the colonial state. In so doing, the British established zero-sum rivalries between prominent families over control of chiefdoms, particularly among the Mende tribes in the south. While this system allowed the British to maintain control through a divide-and-rule strategy, it also generated and then perpetuated significant social tensions in the districts.[26] Consequently, British Imperial rule was characterised by a social and political divide between Freetown and the interior of the country, and between urban and indigenous elites and the "lumpen" rural population. Freetown's Creole population and the chiefly elite were relatively well educated, and increasingly involved in administration and colonial civil service.[27] However,

[23] Allen M. Howard & David E. Skinner, 'Network Building and Political Power in Northwestern Sierra Leone, 1800-65', *Africa*, 54:2 (1984), pp. 21-3.
[24] Bøås, *op. cit.*, pp. 705-7.
[25] Howard & Skinner, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-5.
[26] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-12; Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-8.
[27] Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-9.

the system of indirect rule practiced by the British meant that although the institutions of governance were present in Sierra Leone on independence, the culture and practices of democracy were not well established.[28]

Not all aspects of Sierra Leonean public life are defined by neo-patrimonial affiliations, and there remains a degree of associational fluidity between networks and groups. For example, Sierra Leone has three main religious communities. There are substantial Muslim and Christian groups, of various denominations, which exist alongside traditional or shamanistic religious practices known as Juju.[29] Sierra Leonean society is remarkably tolerant of religious difference, and historically there has been little antagonism between religious groups. Towards the end of the Rebel War, a British officer posted to Sierra Leone observed that both Muslim and Christian prayers were routinely said at the start of meetings in the Sierra Leone Army (SLA), and the Sierra Leonean Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) frequently asked Christian officers to say Muslim observances or vice versa, 'because they all knew it'.[30] In part, this remarkable degree of religious tolerance may stem from a degree of religious fluidity amongst elements of the population. Another British officer advising the SLA during the war recalled 'a fascinating church service on a Sunday up at the 4 Battalion':

> 'the Christian minister would turn up and give a service, and they'd do the crossing themselves and all the routine. The imam would turn up, and the same soldiers would go through the whole Islam routine – they knew a bit of that as well – and all of them would have little Juju bags hanging off their belts, which was their Voodoo magic. You could see them all reaching round behind and giving it a quick rub… and they had it all covered. Religion was important to them, but it wasn't worth dying for.'[31]

This is not to say that the various faiths have always held equal status in Sierra Leonean society. Perhaps as a legacy of British rule, Christian chaplains in the Sierra Leonean military held the rank of captain, as per British military practice, while Muslim imams held the more junior non-commissioned ranks of sergeant or corporal.[32] Historically, however, religious differences in Sierra Leone have

[28] Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 38.
[29] Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 58.
[30] Interview with Colonel (retd.) Mike Dent CBE, SILSEP and IMATT Adviser to the Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence 1999-2002, conducted in Worcester on 20 November 2015.
[31] Interview with Participant A15, a British Army officer who served with IMATT in 2000-1, conducted in Salisbury on 1 October 2015.
[32] Interview with Participant A21, a British officer in IMATT 2004-5, conducted in Salisbury on 17 November 2015.

not translated into sectarian or political tensions. Indeed, the country's first democratically elected president after the Rebel War, Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, was educated at a Christian high school and went on to marry a Catholic despite being a Muslim with a Koranic upbringing; he later attributed his electoral success in part to his religiously diverse background.[33]

While religious differences are not a source of communal tension in Sierra Leone in the way ethnic and geographic identities can be, neo-patrimonialism does interact with and operate through other forms of social affiliation, like secret societies and hunting organisations. These secret societies initiate members into their secret knowledge and rituals, and in the process act as facilitators through which big men interact. In this sense, it is less the access to secret knowledge which membership to these societies grants that is significant, than the concealed interactions between important power-brokers that they obligate or facilitate.[34] In Sierra Leone various male and female secret societies exist, including the Poro and Wonde for men and the Sande and Bondo societies for women.[35] One UN election adviser during Sierra Leone's 2007 presidential electoral process observed that, 'They are very, very big the secret societies. My understanding is that they are associated with political parties, but…I could not get anyone to talk about the secret societies or what goes on there in the period of two years and a bit.'[36] Regardless of direct political affiliation, however, it is clear that these organisations can act as significant sources of social mobilisation. For example, one British officer serving in Kenema in 2007-8 witnessed near-spontaneous mass protests by a female secret society, after an international NGO publically addressed issues around female genital mutilation, which constituted part of its initiation practices.[37] Thus,

[33] Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, *Coming Back From the Brink in Sierra Leone: A Memoir* (Accra, EPP Books, 2010), p. 3, p. 28.
[34] Jörgel & Utas, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-62.
[35] Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, p. 4; Bøås, *op. cit.*, p. 706.
[36] Interview with Dr. Clever Nyathi, UNDP adviser to the Sierra Leone Political Parties Registration Commission in 2007, conducted in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe on 28 February 2013 by Rachel Jackson as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 23, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/dr-clever-nyathi, accessed on 01/07/16.
[37] Interview with Participant A22, a British Army officer serving in IMATT in 2008-9, conducted in Shrewsbury on 24 November 2015.

secret societies can also provide a basis for legitimate challenge to both chiefly and neo-patrimonial state power, as well as underpin it.[38]

However, the specifically ethnic character of post-colonial neo-patrimonial politics in Sierra Leone was reinforced under British colonial rule by uneven geographic development, which mirrored major ethnic divisions. After Sierra Leone became a British Protectorate in 1896, a railway was built across the south of the country connecting Freetown on the western coast with Pedembu on the border with Liberia. A shorter branch line was subsequently built in 1916 connecting to Makeni in the north. Although the growth of Freetown had precipitated a significant increase in trade with the interior prior to the railway, the new line opened up Sierra Leone's interior to 'Creolisation'.[39] The economy subsequently shifted to exploit rich mineral deposits of rutile, bauxite, iron ore, and in the eastern Kono District, alluvial diamonds.[40] However, the country possessed little industry other than extractives, and urban areas largely acted as centres of trade for the import and export of raw materials by foreign companies. Moreover, development outside of the capital was largely confined to the predominantly Mende areas along the main southern rail line. Keen consequently described the Sierra Leonean colonial economy as one of 'skewed development'.[41] Taken together, the overlapping structures of ethnicity and tribe, region and network, thus shape neo-patrimonial politics in Sierra Leone.

Patrimonialism and Civil-Military Relations from Independence to War

If power in Sierra Leone is exercised according to a neo-patrimonial logic, how then have these overlapping power structures affected the historic conduct of civil-military relations in Sierra Leone? Studies of non-western civil-military relations in clientelist regimes elsewhere in Africa and the Middle East have presented various conceptions of civil-military relations, with varied implications for military cohesion and state stability. Enloe argued that regimes relying on limited powerbases typically employed 'ethnic security mapping' to coup-proof

[38] International Crisis Group, 'Liberia and Sierra Leone: Rebuilding Failed States', Africa Report No. 87 (Dakar/Brussels, 8 December 2004), p. 26.
[39] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-13; Bøås, *op. cit*., p. 706.
[40] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-40; Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.
[41] Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

their armed forces, while Peled concluded that such ethnic stacking practices lead to predatory and unaccountable armed forces.[42] While such strategies are primarily aimed at reinforcing state security (often at the expense of national and human security), recent studies of ethnic stacking in the Syrian military have found that, in fact, such practices can result in internally divided armed forces, which are themselves potentially destabilising.[43] Following independence, civil-military relations in Sierra Leone became characterised by infighting in the officer corps, and by political interjections by the military. To what extent do neo-patrimonial processes account for this, as opposed to military mismanagement and hasty decolonisation? Equally, did the intersection between the formal and shadow state in the Sierra Leonean military support or undermine civil-military relations and the exercise of democratic governance?

The Sierra Leonean armed forces trace their origins to the colonial regiments raised by the British for imperial policing. On the eve of independence, the Sierra Leonean military appeared relatively professional and cohesive. As independence approached, significant effort was expended to prepare the forces of the colony for national self-government. As per British imperial practice, Sierra Leonean units were composed of locally-recruited soldiers commanded by white British officers. However, postings to Sierra Leone were considered both unhealthy and unfashionable in the United Kingdom, and consequently the quality and quantity of seconded officers was typically poor. In advance of decolonisation, the British began to increase numbers of locally-recruited officers and NCOs to replace seconded white British cadres. Military educational and fitness standards were also tightened to bolster its local reputation and ease Sierra Leonean perceptions of the military as an agent of imperial dominion staffed by 'a bunch of illiterates'. Native Sierra Leonean officers enjoyed locally competitive salaries, and were trained and employed to similar standards as white British officers; a development intended to lay the foundations of a democratically-accountable institution of an

[42] Cynthia H. Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1980); Alon Peled, *A Question of Loyalty: Military Manpower Policy in Multi-Ethnic States* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1998).
[43] James T. Quinlivan, 'Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East', *International Security*, 24:2 (1999), pp. 131-65; Philip Roessler, 'The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa', *World Politics*, 63:02 (2011), pp. 300-346; Hicham Bou Nassif, '"Second-Class": The Grievances of Sunni Officers in the Syrian Armed Forces', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 38:5 (2015), pp. 626-649.

independent state. The altered entrance and training standards were also designed 'to avoid a preponderance of one tribe and achieve some sort of ethnic balance'. However, many of the institutional foundations of an independent army remained incomplete on independence, and the new Royal Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF) were still reliant on a degree of foreign support; from Britain and from local neighbours like Nigeria, which continued to provide technical training via their own military academies.[44] Nonetheless, the force deployed a company on UN operations in the Congo immediately after independence, and in 1965 the first Sierra Leonean force commander was appointed, Brigadier David Lansana.[45]

While the fabric of the RSLMF may have conformed to a legacy British military template, Sierra Leonean civil-military relations were almost immediately shaped by the neo-patrimonial structure of Sierra Leone's post-colonial politics. After independence from Britain in 1961, the Freetown-interior rivalries, which predominated under the colonial administration, were supplanted by a far more divisive rivalry between the evenly balanced, geographically distinct and demographically significant Temne and Mende groups. Sierra Leone's first independent government was formed by the Mende-dominated Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), led by Sir Milton Margai. Although the SLPP did attempt to win over Temne groups in the north up to 1964, it largely ruled through chiefly support, and in return turned a blind eye to chiefly abuses. Consequently, Temne political support became entrenched with the opposition All People's Congress (APC), particularly after Margai was replaced by his half-brother, Sir Albert Margai, in 1964. The patrimonial politics which began to characterise SLPP rule during this period were also manifested in its relations with the military. Under Albert Margai, for example, the proportion of Mende in the officer corps rose from 26 per cent to 52 per cent; far disproportionate to the Mende's third of population, illustrating the gradual ingress of neo-patrimonial logic into the military institution.[46]

[44] Andrew Stewart, 'An Enduring Commitment: The British Military's Role in Sierra Leone', *Defence Studies*, 8:3 (2008), pp. 360-5; see also, Brigadier F. A. S. Clarke, 'The Story of the Royal West African Frontier Force', *RUSI Journal*, 97:586 (1952), pp. 223-229.
[45] Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, p. 7.
[46] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-6.

The consequences of this erosion of military institutional independence became clear during the first major electoral cycle following decolonisation. As the 1967 general election approached, eight officers were arrested for allegedly plotting a coup d'etat, including the Deputy Force Commander, a northerner called Colonel John Bangura. The charges were never proven, but the incident raised the political stakes and Margai subsequently requested a guarantee of military support from Guinea. The 1967 election was closely contested, and despite extensive vote-rigging and subversion, resulted in a marginal victory for the Temne-backed APC. Shortly after the APC leader Siaka Stevens was announced the winner, Brigadier Lansana led a clique of Mende military officers in a coup. Martial law was declared, the Governor-General and Stevens were arrested, and soldiers opened fire on protesting crowds killing about 30 people.[47] It appears the coup was initiated at the request of Lanana's political patrons in the SLPP; primarily as a delaying tactic to allow Margai time to cajole Paramount Chiefs holding swing seats in parliament round to his cause, and thus provide a façade of legitimacy to his reinstatement as Prime Minister. However, Lansana failed to convene parliament, and two days later was himself overthrown by a group of army majors who had helped him instigate the initial coup. This "Officers' Coup", or "Majors' Coup" as it became known, installed a joint military-police junta. Both coups were largely the result of the politicisation of the officer corps by the SLPP, and had benefitted from police and senior SLPP political support. The junta subsequently reflected the stance of non-Margai elements of the SLPP who were disgruntled with his leadership in the run up to the unsuccessful 1967 election.[48]

While the RSLMF was undoubtedly subject to ethnic stacking by the SLPP, this did not effectively coup proof the regime. Indeed, because Sierra Leone remained democratic, thus providing a legitimate mechanism for removing the incumbent governing party, the patrimonial stacking of the officer corps actually encouraged coups to prevent regime change. Equally though, the stacking of the officer corps does not appear to have ensured military subservience to the incumbent political leadership either. As the Officers' Coup

[47] Hinga Norman, then a junior officer but later a defence minister in President Kabbah's SLPP administration, played a prominent role in the coup by arresting the key politicians.
[48] Anton Bebler, *Military Rule in Africa: Dahomey, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Mali* (New York, NY, Praeger, 1973), pp. 64-73; Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9; Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Peters, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

highlights, the neo-patrimonial logic to SLPP ethnic stacking of the military meant that officers' were beholden to a range of SLPP big men, drawing military officers into political infighting between different factions of the ruling party. While these dynamics are by no means unique to Sierra Leone, the civil-military interactions evident in the 1967 coups are more complex than the picture of ethnic stacking and coup proofing presented by Enloe and Peled.[49] The 1967 coups are better characterised by the rivalries between governing elites, described by Roessler as an 'internal security dilemma', rather than between in-groups and out-groups.[50] That said, while the Officers' Coup may have reflected intra-group tensions among the southern Mende-dominated SLPP, it did little to ease resentment at being denied political power among the predominantly Temne and northern-backed APC.

After a year-long interregnum, the Officers' Junta was itself undone in a further putsch, this time by enlisted military personnel. This was the first act in a significant history of tensions between senior and junior elements of the RSLMF. Although the Officers' Junta lacked public legitimacy, managing to alienate almost all sections of Sierra Leonean society through its social and economic policies, the Soldiers' Coup was largely an internal military affair. It was headed by a group of senior non-commissioned officers, and described by Bebler as 'an internal pay strike of the ranks for better conditions of service and for self-promotion'.[51] All serving indigenous army and police officers were subsequently stripped of rank and uniform and jailed. Nonetheless, most of the participating soldiers were northern, and they reinstated the northern Colonel Bangura. Stevens was promptly restored as the elected Prime Minister, and initially headed a unity coalition government which put the leaders of the former junta on trial.[52] Although it returned the country to (notionally) democratic civilian government, the counter-coup only served to further politicise the army and ethnicise politics.

Stevens subsequently used patronage to consolidate his position, and in order to undercut potential Mende military opposition he appointed disproportionately high numbers of northern ethnic groups into the army. From

[49] Enloe, *op. cit.*; Peled, *op. cit.*
[50] Roessler, *op. cit.*, p. 302.
[51] Bebler, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
[52] *Ibid.*, pp. 77-80.

1968 onwards the army was purged of Mende officers, either through accusations of treason or by pensioning them off. All senior military appointments were held by northerners, who held their positions on the basis of personal loyalty to Stevens. As big men in their own right, these officers appropriated the state's military resources for their own personal projects. Officers, and increasingly soldiers, were expected to be loyal to the APC rather than the nation, creating a view among Mende groups that the army had become a paramilitary wing of the APC. Many soldiers had to unofficially buy their enlistments, a prospect which was still economically attractive given the rice bounty received by recruits.[53] Patrimonial recruitment became known as the 'card system', under which appointments in the army would be handed out as favours by ministers to their supporters. An officer or potential recruit would approach an appropriate government big man who, for a fee, would provide his calling card and annotate the reverse with instructions for the hopeful's appointment to a particular position in the armed forces or police.[54] These policies exacerbated the country's already present north-south divide and created a lasting disparity in the military, which remained almost exclusively northern well into the 1990s. Ultimately though, this helped create a self-fulfilling cycle of destabilising clientelism and resulting resentment and alienation in the RSLMF, akin to that observed by Nassif if the contemporary Syrian military.[55]

As the APC gradually appropriated the armed forces, purging it of potentially disloyal members from other patrimonial networks, this decline in meritocracy and accountability was mirrored across government. The judiciary was politically neutered, and when contested, elections saw widespread use of violence and intimidation. Losing candidates were frequently the subject of highly public and extremely aggressive attacks. Keen has argued that this created a public understanding of politics as a zero-sum game, in which power became associated with physical strength and traditional mystic qualities, and losing was associated with personal peril and public shame.[56] As Richards argued, this is an intrinsic feature of neo-patrimonialism, which 'involves redistributing national resources as marks of *personal* favour to followers who

[53] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-9; Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-2.
[54] Paul Jackson & Peter Albrecht*, Reconstructing Security after Conflict: Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2011), p. 61.
[55] Nassif, *op. cit.*
[56] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-9.

respond with loyalty to the leader rather than to the institution the leader represents.'[57] Accordingly, first under the SLPP and then even more so under Stevens, neo-patrimonial relationships became the basis for both party political and personal power. For example, Stevens maintained a number of mobile generators at the President's official residence, State House, which he could use to intervene in local affairs. If, for example, students protested at an interrupted power supply and local politicians lacked the funds to rectify the issue, Stevens could dispatch his generators and tell students, 'see, if you had come to me first, without rioting, I could have fixed this for you earlier (as your "father").'[58]

Notwithstanding the divisive nature of patrimonial and ethnic politics, Sierra Leonean society itself remained largely intact. Inter-marriage between ethnic groups remained common, and Creole remained a *lingua franca*. The chiefly class was not destroyed, and elites of all groups continued to be educated side-by-side at the same English-speaking schools. For a time, the APC even managed to elicit significant support amongst some elements of the Mende population; notably among disenfranchised southern 'youngmen' and deposed Mende chiefly houses seeking leverage in southern tribal politics.[59] However, Stevens' patrimonial powerbase was maintained through patrimonial business dealings, which effectively hollowed-out the formal structures of the Sierra Leonean state. Accordingly, Stevens personally monopolised diamond mining and export, oil and rice importation and distribution, and control of the national airline, in conjunction with a small number of Lebanese businessmen.[60] The Lebanese community in Sierra Leone had grown to form a significant mercantile class, periodically expanding during bouts of conflict in Lebanon. One British officer later observed that as a group, the Lebanese appeared to particularly rely on patrimonial business dealings because, as a distinct immigrant community, they had little access to ethnic or tribal sources of social leverage.[61]

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[57] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
[58] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[59] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-6.
[60] Jörgel & Utas, *op. cit.*, p. 63; Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-2; Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-2; Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-25.
[61] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel (retd.) Jeremey Stadward, a senior British officer in IMATT 2001-3, conducted in Wiltshire on 8 September 2015.

Despite Stevens' attempts to subordinate the military through patronage and ethnic recruitment, the RSLMF remained both highly politicised and internally divided. This gave rise to a series of further attempted coups. In 1971, officers tried to assassinate Stevens and overthrow the government in order to prevent him from declaring the country a republic. A number of officers were later executed for their part in the plot, including the then force commander, Brigadier Bangura. In consequence, Freetown revoked the Freedom of the City which had been granted to the armed forces. That year, Sierra Leone became a republic with Stevens as the country's first president. Following the formal declaration of the republic, the military was renamed the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (still the RSLMF). At the same time, Stevens removed the right of appeal from court martials and began side-lining the army as a military force.[62] In 1973, Stevens created a parallel paramilitary organisation called the Special Security Division (SSD), which acted as a shadow army to counter-balance the regular military. This was initially called the Internal Security Unit, leading first to the satirical epithet 'I shoot you' for ISU, and later 'Siaka Stevens' Dogs' after the unit was renamed. The SSD was trained by Cuba to relieve Stevens' reliance on the Guinean military, and was heavily involved in internal repression. This paramilitary was more frequently armed than the regular army, and was used to keep political opponents and traditional rulers like the Paramount Chiefs in check.[63] The paramilitary also acted as a praetorian guard, rivalling the regular army and lowering its relative prestige and influence. This generated lasting antagonisms in the Sierra Leonean military, which perpetuated the perceived need for counter-balancing political militias.

However, the emergence of a rival political paramilitary did little to deter the heavily politicised and deeply divided military from further political activities. In 1974, elements of the military staged a further coup attempt, this time against the Vice-President while Stevens was out of the country. Its failure resulted in the execution of 15 conspirators by firing squad, the ex-Brigadier Lansana among them. In response, Stevens appointed both the military and police force commanders as members of parliament and later cabinet ministers, bringing the senior military leadership deeper into his personal network. In 1978, Sierra Leone formally became a one-party state; a path it had been informally

[62] Bebler, *op. cit.*, p. 80; Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, p. 9.
[63] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-7; Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-3.

descending since Stevens took office. The powerful neo-patrimonial networks that spanned political party and military institution were similarly apparent in Stevens' hand-picked successor, army commander Major General Joseph Momoh, who took over the Presidency in 1985. Although Momoh had come to power from the senior ranks of the army, this did not prevent further military attempts against his rule. In 1987 another alleged plot was uncovered, and the Vice-President and several soldiers were executed.[64] Momoh did briefly attempt to improve the country's human rights record and even mooted a return to multi-party democracy – announcing multi-party elections in 1990 to be held in 1992 – largely in the hope of garnering international aid.[65] But the fundamentally neo-patrimonial basis of APC rule remained consistent in the years before the Rebel War, and the concession came too late.

The repeated coups which characterise Sierra Leonean civil-military relations between independence and civil war demonstrate a deeply politicised armed force. The growing politicisation of the armed forces during the period was, to a certain extent, the product of uniquely military factors. At somewhat under 100 including seconded British officers, the Sierra Leonean officer corps was very small.[66] Indeed, in 1966 Sierra Leone's total military strength numbered only 1,360 personnel, comprising one infantry battalion, an up country company, and a small naval detachment.[67] This facilitated easy discourse amongst the officer corps and ensured that the threshold of support required for a military coup was relatively low, such that a small number of individuals (be they charismatic soldiers or civilian big men) could exercise a disproportionate influence over the wider armed forces. Moreover, the rapid indigenisation of the military during British decolonisation had led to some unusually rapid promotions, and consequent discrepancies of age and rank in the officer corps which generated professional grievances. The Sierra Leonean military also inherited a British colonial military structure, replete with significant disparities between officer and solider pay scales; a legacy which on the one hand provoked resentment among the soldiery, while on the other produced expectations about the status and lifestyle of officers that proved unsustainable

[64] Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, p. 10.
[65] Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-3.
[66] Bebler, *op. cit.* p. 143.
[67] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

in the post-colonial state. Arguably, this dynamic was exacerbated by the fact that Sierra Leone's legacy military establishment, while objectively very small, was nonetheless still somewhat bloated and unaffordable in relation to Sierra Leone's post-colonial budget and level of external threat. With little external menace to focus on, the military was drawn towards internal intervention in a similar fashion to the role of British colonial units in imperial policing.[68]

While the post-colonial military legacy may have facilitated politicisation, the active agent was the neo-patrimonial stacking of the military. Neo-patrimonial subversion of institutional processes for promotion and recruitment saw the military begin to replicate the factional divisions present in wider Sierra Leonean civil society, especially in the officer corps. Indeed, the modest size of the military establishment only served to enable the relatively easy patrimonial subversion (and therefore politicisation) of a significant proportion of the officer corps. This matches the ethnic stacking and coup-proofing observed in other non-Western states;[69] though in Sierra Leone, the patrimonial nature of politics meant these processes began even before the advent of an authoritarian one-party state. This directly led to the coups of 1967, in which pro-SLPP officers intervened in the democratic process in support of their civilian patrons, and was mirrored in the neo-patrimonial character of military appointments under the APC, and in later attempts to unseat Stevens by southern officers, who had little recourse but to coups in order to further their careers. To a degree, this period in Sierra Leonean civil-military relations also supports Ronald Kreb's assertion that wider political discourse about national and political identities directly shapes the nature of military inclusion.[70] Yet the use of the SSD as a counterbalance to the military suggests that Stevens was not able to totally suborn the military institution, or to completely displace the influence of rival big men in the officer corps. In fact, the Sierra Leonean military did manage to retain the rump of some institutional capability during the pre-war years. In 1989, for example, the Sierra Leone Army again deployed on Peace Support Operations overseas, contributing LEOBATT 1 to Liberia as part of the Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) provided by the Economic Community for

[68] Bebler, *op. cit.*, p. 79, pp. 139-44.
[69] Peled, *op. cit.;* Enloe, *op. cit.*
[70] Ronald R. Krebs, 'One Nation under Arms? Military Participation Policy and the Politics of Identity', *Security Studies*, 14:3 (2005), pp. 535-6.

West African States (ECOWAS), and continued to rotate a battalion through this deployment until 1998.[71] Nonetheless, the decline in military accountability in Sierra Leone's post-independence civil-military relations reflects the increasing neo-patrimonial hollowing out of the military institution, in parallel with the similar decline in the political conventions of Sierra Leonean democracy.

Neo-Patrimonialism and the Rebel War

In 1991, a group of rebels and mercenaries crossed the border from Liberia into Sierra Leone under the banner of the RUF, initiating Sierra Leone's decade long Rebel War.[72] While neo-patrimonial politics may have undermined the integrity of Sierra Leone's armed forces, the proximate cause of the Rebel War was the escalating violence in neighbouring Liberia. The ease with which insecurity in Liberia spilled over into Sierra Leone reflects the shared ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups that straddled the common border, such that Hoffman views the two conflicts essentially as one unified 'Mano River War'.[73] The RUF movement was initially supported by Charles Taylor, the RUF leader Foday Sankoh having met Taylor in a training camp in Libya. In turn, many of the sentiments evident in early RUF ideology owe much to Gadhafi's *Green Book*.[74] But important as these regional dynamics are, they do not in of themselves explain how a relatively small rebel incursion ignited a protracted and brutal insurgency in Sierra Leone. Nor can they explain the Sierra Leonean state's consistent inability defeat the rebels.

As the war progressed, fighting increasingly centred on control of Kono's diamond mines. Consequently, Paul Williams described the civil war in Sierra Leone as 'linked inextricably to the pursuit of profit by those individuals and groups able to command the necessary force'.[75] Williams nonetheless refuted Kaplan's Malthusian thesis, arguing that:

[71] Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, p. 10.
[72] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5; Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-9; Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-4.
[73] Danny Hoffman, *The War Machines: Young Men and Violence in Sierra Leone and Liberia* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2011), particularly pp. 27-54.
[74] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-9.
[75] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, *op. cit.*, pp. xiv-xvii; Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-9

> 'the violence is not random, nor does it result from the senseless activities of psychopaths. Rather it follows a clear logic: the pursuit of commercial gain within the context of the country's complex patrimonial system.'[76]

Although individual greed undoubtedly played a role in the calculations of both individual fighters and their leaders, the Rebel War is best understood as a product of the collapse of Sierra Leone's neo-patrimonial state. The attendant social unravelling this collapse unleashed provided the tinder for the RUF's incursion to light. Under APC rule, Sierra Leone's economy had declined rapidly. Food production fell and the country began to import significant amounts of rice, which became the key currency of patronage.[77] At the same time, declining state revenues were stretched to maintain the façade of the formal state. In 1980, for example, Sierra Leone hosted the Organisation for African Unity summit, which cost the country a sum equivalent to its entire foreign exchange reserves.[78] Official extractives production fell as some areas became mined out, and raw products were increasingly smuggled out of the country in return for foreign currency, itself in flight, in order to grease the wheels of the shadow state.[79] In order to access foreign credit, President Momoh agreed to an International Monetary Fund structural adjustment programme with accompanying austerity measures. In 1978 the currency, the Leone, ceased to be pegged to sterling. In 1981, one Leone was worth 1.16 US dollars; by 1991, one US dollar bought 295 Leones.[80] Government expenditure on health, public transport, and education fell dramatically, reducing the patrimonial benefits the formal state offered. Momoh attempted to maintain pay and rice for the armed forces, and deployed the military to crack down on diamond smuggling. While this removed the military from the capital, it did little for the state of discipline in the military. Rather than restoring customs revenue, the army became actively involved in the smuggling business, and by 1991 units were refusing orders to quit the diamond districts.[81]

The motivations presented by RUF members support this conception of the war as rooted in the failure of the formal and patrimonial state. To a certain

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[76] Paul Williams, 'Fighting for Freetown: British Military Intervention in Sierra Leone', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 22:3 (2001), p. 141.
[77] Peters, *op. cit.*, p. 44-5.
[78] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 24-6; Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-4.
[79] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-2.
[80] World Bank, 'Official Exchange Rate (LCU per US$, Period Average)', online at http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/PA.NUS.FCRF, accessed on 14/02/16.
[81] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-5.

extent, the views of RUF fighters must be treated with caution. The motives of foot soldiers do not always accord with those of their leadership, and anthropologists have noted how the self-perceptions of RUF fighters rapidly changed in the altered post-war political climate. Nonetheless, these individual perceptions are compelling.[82] RUF propaganda claimed that:

> 'There was no fairness and transparency in the system in Sierra Leone. Despite mineral riches, there was no development of roads, schools and health centres in rural areas. No one in government was listening.'[83]

Peters' work on the RUF makes clear that this propaganda rang true for many RUF recruits, both conscripts and volunteers alike. One woman who volunteered for the RUF in her early twenties recalled that, 'We were suffering too much…The main reason was the lack of job facilities and lack of encouragement for the youth.' Even those who were forcibly conscripted sometimes came to share this understanding of the war. A man in his late thirties who was indirectly coerced into joining later told Peters that, 'we were fighting for awareness and also to have justice in the country.'[84] The detrimental effects of neo-patrimonial collapse on education proved particularly significant. Education had traditionally been held in high esteem in Sierra Leonean society, and was viewed as a route to status and opportunity. Declining access to education resulting from state bankruptcy provoked widespread disaffection, and initial RUF cadres came from amongst the ranks of disaffected student radicals.[85] The RUF movement tapped into currents of ethnic and regional tensions underlined by the patrimonial system. The majority of RUF fighters were politically-excluded Mende speakers from the southern districts along Sierra Leone's eastern border, and accounts by victims of the RUF specifically described rebel fighters as Mende and noted their destruction of Temne lands.[86]

Accordingly, society in RUF bush camps rejected pre-war social norms. The social hierarchy was inverted, with youth rather than age, wickedness rather than education, defining social status. RUF bush life became the conscious "other" of traditional society, and social taboos and norms were

[82] Keen, *op. cit.,* p. 4.
[83] Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 146.
[84] Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-1.
[85] Keen, *op. cit.,* pp. 27-31; Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest, op. cit.*, pp. 52-5.
[86] Chris Coulter, *Bush Wives and Girl Soldiers: Women's Lives Through War and Peace in Sierra Leone* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 95-153.

deliberately, often ruthlessly, transgressed.[87] Keen has argued that the RUF attempted to create a social environment without shame, in which transgressions served to bind the rebel movement together, a conclusion supported by Coulter's research on women's wartime experiences.[88] Thus, the social dynamics of wartime combatants suggests that the greed-grievance dynamic is not a binary "either-or" motivation, but a dialectic in which greed and grievance interact like two sides of the same coin.[89] In this sense, the Rebel War was not so much an ideological struggle as a reflection of the collapse of Sierra Leonean formal and shadow states. Accordingly, there is some truth in Peters' description of the war as a 'crisis of youth', an understanding shared by Bøås and Dunn, who concluded that the war represented a crisis of modernity in which rebels 'rage against the machine' – specifically, the machinery of dysfunctional state institutions.[90]

Politics and the Army at War

The SLA was undoubtedly among these dysfunctional state institutions. A number of senior RUF commanders claimed military backgrounds, and Sankoh himself was a former corporal who had been imprisoned for his part in one of the many pre-war coups against Stevens.[91] During the Rebel War, Sierra Leone was subjected to two extended periods of military rule, both partially the product of the RSLMF's pre-war neo-patrimonial decline. The Rebel War accelerated the decline of the RSLMF as an institution, further subverting military identities and behavioural norms. But at the same time, the manifest incapability of the RSLMF as a fighting force also gave rise to new trends in Sierra Leonean civil-military relations. Just as Bruneau and Matei have called into question the emphasis on civilian control as the defining paradigm of civil-military thought, instead highlighting the importance of military effectiveness and efficiency,[92] so the RSLMF's battlefield impotence shaped both governmental and military attitudes to politics and the use of force.

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[87] Coulter*, op. cit.*, pp. 95-153.
[88] *Ibid.*, pp. 144-5; Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-81.
[89] Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 2, pp. 290-6.
[90] Peters, *op. cit.*; Bøås & Dunn, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-37.
[91] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
[92] Florina Christiana Matei, 'A New Conceptualisation of Civil-Military Relations' in Bruneau & Matei, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-38; Thomas C. Bruneau, 'Efficiency in the Use of Resources', in *ibid.*, pp. 29-33.

The NPRC Coup

At the outbreak of the conflict, the RSLMF struggled to deal with the escalating violence and the RUF quickly gained ground. Supported by various Liberian anti-Taylor militia groups operating in Sierra Leone, the military counter-attacked in late 1991, and began to push the RUF back towards the border. Yet this temporary success only served to drive the RUF into an insurgent campaign of hit-and-run guerrilla warfare, which rapidly extended their influence across the south of the country. In April 1992, a group of army officers from the front mutinied, and proceeded to oust President Momoh. Captain Valentine Strasser was installed as the head of a military junta called the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). Kandeh characterised the NPRC coup as the product of a "militariat"; a proletariat of junior officers and enlisted soldiers in the military, responsible for doing the fighting but largely insulated from the clientelist and patrimonial benefits of military politicisation enjoyed by senior commanders. Kandeh argued that the militariat in African armed forces were uniquely disposed to political instability, being both politically disenfranchised and in active possession of the instrument of coercive force. Yet, without any unifying political agenda, Kandeh concluded that militariat coups – the NPRC included – benefited only those soldiers actively involved in the putsch, while further undermining governmental institutions and military discipline.[93]

Matching the militariat concept, the NPRC coup was carried out by a coterie of front-line junior officers, largely from a single battalion, motivated by disgruntlement at the regime's inability to sufficiently resource the war effort. Strasser and the NPRC were familiar with the RUF's appeal to the country's disaffected youth, and initially won a degree of popular support for the NPRC through anti-corruption rhetoric, street clean-ups, and the promise to return the country to democracy. Nonetheless, the NPRC simultaneously continued with previous coup-proofing trends in Sierra Leonean civil-military relations, executing a number of pro-APC army and police officers and posting others to the front. After a brief hiatus, the NPRC began to prosecute the campaign

[93] Jimmy D. Kandeh, 'What Does the "Militariat" Do When It Rules? Military Regimes: The Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia', *Review of African Political Economy*, 23:69 (1996), pp. 387-404.

against the RUF with added vigour.[94] While the NPRC plotters may well epitomise Kandeh's conception of a militariat, the NPRC coup equally reflects the enduring weakness of the institutions of the RSLMF. At the start of the war, the SLA had been a small and largely ceremonial force, militarily neutered by the political infighting of the APC years. In order to meet the rising RUF threat, the military had been expanded rapidly from among Freetown's disaffected and unemployed youth. As the war escalated, political infighting within the officer corps also continued, and prior to the NPRC coup at least one prominent army commander was murdered by a rival army faction.[95]

Although the NPRC was initially able to make inroads against the RUF, the military institution continued to decay under the junta. The NPRC continued Momoh's pattern of recruitment, bringing large numbers of Freetown's disaffected youth into the army, typically with as little as 19 to 21 days training.[96] Drug use became common, and marijuana and cocaine were actually issued to troops in an attempt to prop up their flagging combat prowess. The consumption of gunpowder acquired from ammunition as a stimulant also became common practice.[97] Far from strengthening the military, the institutional fabric of the RSLMF began to further disintegrate under the NPRC. The SLA developed a reputation for "sobel", or soldier-rebel, behaviour. Rogue soldiers became pre-occupied with the spoils of illegal mining, and joined the RUF's "sell-game" of looting, violence and appropriation in an apparent distortion of the pre-war shadow state's practices. Some of this activity was actively supported by the NPRC as a means of generating the income needed to maintain its rule. In 1992, for example, Kono was overrun by the RUF largely because troops commanded by Strasser were busy mining diamonds.[98] By 1994, discipline in the RSLMF had declined to such a degree that it was becoming increasingly unclear which incidents were carried out by the RUF and which by renegade soldiers. In February that year, 400 soldiers from Teko Barracks in Makeni deserted east so as not to be left out of the plunder. As the RUF sphere of operations extended further west and north, rebels were frequently seen

[94] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-6; Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-15; Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-4, pp. 62-9.
[95] Hoffman, *War Machines*, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-4.
[96] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-100.
[97] *Ibid.*, pp. 104-5.
[98] Kandeh, *op. cit.*, p. 394.

wearing elements of RSLMF uniform.[99] In late 1994, the NPRC publically admitted that it considered at least one fifth of its armed forces actively disloyal.[100] In January 1995, when rumours circulated that the RUF were planning to attack the SIEROMCO bauxite mine in the Mokanji Hills, local soldiers removed the company's heavy machinery along with their protection, and left the site to the mercy of RUF looting. Officers subsequently sold off the company's stolen equipment for private profit in Freetown and Bo.[101] As Keen and Hoffman noted, collusion between rebels and sobels created a situation in which, to many soldiers, continuing the war appeared far more profitable than ending it.[102]

As a consequence of the SLA's growing inability (or unwillingness) to provide either state security or human security, the Rebel War gave rise to a host of alternate security providers. In addition to sponsoring Liberian militias, Sierra Leone signed a mutual defence agreement with Nigeria, and the Nigerian military subsequently become heavily involved in the command and control of the SLA, and in prosecuting the war directly via ECOWAS.[103] The period also saw the rise of various civil defence militias. These militias had initially grown out of the hunting society traditions of Mende villages as a spontaneous response to rural insecurity. Typically referred to as the Kamajor or Kamajoisia after the most powerful southern Mende groups, they also included ethnic northern organisations like the Tamaboros. While the Kamajor militias appropriated traditional hunting customs and rites, including the extensive use of Juju amulets or cross-dressing as magical protection from bullets,[104] most of their members were recruited from the same class of disaffected youth which populated the RUF (and increasingly the SLA). As such, the Kamajor were in many respects a new militia movement.[105] Though initially supported by the

[99] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-15; Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-4, pp. 62-9.
[100] Lansana Gberie, 'The May 25 Coup d'Etat in Sierra Leone: A Militariat Revolt?', *Africa Development*, 22:3/4 (1997), p. 152.
[101] Peters, *op. cit.*, p. 69; Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-7.
[102] Hoffman, *War Machines*, *op. cit.*, p. 83; Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-2, pp. 107-131.
[103] ECOMOG troop contributors in Sierra Leone included other West African states, such as Guinea, but the 3,000 Nigerian soldiers were the most significant. Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
[104] Hoffman, *War Machines*, *op. cit.*, *passim.*
[105] Anthropological interviews with former Kamajor militia and SLA boy soldiers have highlighted strong similarities between the motivations of young men joining and fighting in these armed groups. Typically, disenchantment with the lack of education and economic opportunities and grievances against APC abuses are articulated, together with experiences of insecurity in the countryside, and sometimes compulsion. This rhetoric largely matches that advanced by former

SLA as an auxiliary counter-insurgency force, as sobels began to pose a similar threat to human security as the RUF, these militias became equally antagonistic to the RSLMF. Despite their belief in witchcraft, these local defence organisations could prove surprisingly effective. In December 1994, for example, a spontaneous uprising of civilian militiamen in Bo kept both the army and the RUF at bay for a week.[106]

Strasser also contracted the South African mercenary firm Executive Outcomes (EO) to prosecute the war on behalf of his regime. This recourse to EO was a direct reflection of the RSLMF's military weakness and its impact on civil-military relationships.[107] Initially, the NPRC government had hired a private security company staffed by ex-British army Gurkhas, but the firm withdrew after its American head was killed in an RUF attack.[108] Instead, EO supplied the NPRC with former professional soldiers from the South African military to train the SLA and Kamajor militias, and to provide technical support and command and control expertise. Under EO direction, the SLA and the Kamajor were able to retake the Kono diamond mining district from the RUF, and subsequently destroy the RUF stronghold in the Kangari hills. Much of the actual combat power during this campaign was manned by EO directly; most notably, a number of ex-Soviet helicopter gunships.[109] The NPRC paid EO US$15 million along with diamond mining concessions in newly-recaptured Kono, reputedly totalling over US$30 million. Accordingly, Executive Outcomes' British sister firm, Branch Energy, became a significant shareholder in various Sierra Leonean diamond mines.[110]

While operationally effective against the RUF, this period of EO-led capacity building was both symptomatic of, and further deleterious to, the poor state of civil-military relations, emboldening a faction in the NPRC. With EO's military successes turning the tide of the war against the RUF, pressure was increasing in Freetown to hold elections no later than early 1996 and return the

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members of the RUF to explain their combat experience. See Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-31; Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-5.

[106] Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

[107] Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

[108] Peters, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[109] David Shearer, 'Private Armies and Military Intervention', Adelphi Paper 316 (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998); Hoffman, *War Machines*, *op. cit.*, pp. 44. 39-43; Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-2.

[110] Shearer, *op. cit.*; Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-2; Peters, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

country to democracy. Yet, those in the NPRC who had benefitted from the RSLMF's sobel activities viewed the prospect of both peace and democracy as a direct threat to their political power and sources of illicit wealth.[111] On 15 January 1996, Strasser was overthrown in a palace coup by his deputy, Julius Maada Bio, who replaced him as chairman of the NPRC. A lieutenant at the time of the NPRC coup, Bio subsequently appointed himself a brigadier and acted as the main liaison between the NPRC and EO, who may also have colluded in his coup.[112]

Bio held talks with the rebels in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on the basis that peace should be pursued instead of the promised elections. The RUF's willingness to negotiate was undoubtedly a product of EO's military strength, and it seems that Bio's reconciliation with the RUF was also facilitated by the fact that his elder sister had risen to a senior position in the RUF. Equally though, both the NPRC under Bio and the RUF found common cause in stalling elections, realising that democracy would mutually threaten their position and business interests.[113] Bio nonetheless publically assented to hold elections, but colluded with the RUF to undermine the process behind the scenes. In February 1996, for example, the homes of the Electoral Commission head and the leading opposition SLPP presidential candidate, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, were attacked with gunfire and grenades before a conference scheduled to decide on election dates. Soldiers were suspected of carrying out the attacks, and NPRC troops later engaged in the widespread intimidation of voters.[114] Up-country, sobels colluded with the RUF in a brutal campaign of amputations, chopping off voters' hands and thumbs in a symbolic attempt to prevent the electorate casting their votes. Victims were reputedly asked whether they wanted "short or long sleeves" – amputation at the wrist or at the elbow.[115]

Despite attempts to derail the democratic process, presidential elections were held, and on 29 March 1996, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was sworn in as

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[111] Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
[112] Hoffman, *War Machines*, *op. cit.*, p. 41; see also Peters, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5; Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-5; Kandeh, *op. cit.*, pp. 399.
[113] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-5.
[114] *Ibid.*, p. 156.
[115] Artemis Christodulou, 'Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Appendix 5: Amputations in the Sierra Leone Conflict', online at http://www.sierra-leone.org/Other-Conflict/APPENDICES/Appendix%205%20%20Amputations.pdf, accessed on 16/02/16; Keen, Op. Cit., p. 154.

president. He inherited a disaffected and disloyal military, an economy in ruins, and the civil war in a state of suspended animation. In November 1996, Kabbah signed the Abidjan Accords with RUF leader Sankoh in the face of mounting international pressure. In return for RUF demobilisation and amnesty, EO were required to leave the county. Instead, international peacekeepers would be deployed, and the British and Americans agreed to supply military trainers to rebuild a national army. Unfortunately, these efforts proved lukewarm. According to Kabbah, the joint UK-US training team consisted of just five soldiers who were promptly withdrawn after a mutiny at the SLA's Benguema training centre.[116] During 1996, elements of the military staged two further coup attempts against Kabbah's government, the first in September and again in December.[117] Kabbah was increasingly forced to rely on the Nigerian military, and on the Kamajor militia. Predominantly drawn from the SLPP's traditional southern Mende heartlands, the Kamajor had been brought under central government control under the title of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF). The Kamajor's right to bear arms was legalised, and the CDF umbrella organisation was headed by Chief Hinga Norman, who became the SLPP Deputy Defence Minister.[118] The reliance Kabbah's new SLPP government placed on the Kamajor over the SLA was to have a further destabilising effect on civil-military relations. As EO left the country following the Abidjan Accord, the RUF promptly reneged on the agreement, throwing Sierra Leone into crisis once again.[119]

[116] Kabbah, *op. cit.*, p. 64; see also Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 204.
[117] Steve Riley, 'Sierra Leone: the Militariat Strikes Again', *Review of African Political Economy*, 24:72 (1997), pp. 289-90.
[118] President Kabbah was double-hatted as the Minister of Defence, see Hoffman, *War Machines*, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-3. There is significant controversy over the extent to which the CDF umbrella constituted a military organisation with an effective chain of command, and the extent to which individuals like Hinga Norman were actually able to exert control over Kamajor fighters. This became a central feature of the Special Court for Sierra Leone indictment of CDF leaders, including Norman, for war crimes committed by the CDF under the principle of command responsibility. In his expert testimony on behalf of the defence, Hoffman argued that the Kamajor were effectively a militarised social network through which command and control was exercised in a fluid fashion via patronage, and accordingly CDF commanders had limited ability to practically direct operational militia activity. It appears, for example, that after the SLPP came to power there was infighting between rival Kamajor groups over control of diamond mines, as rival Mende big men jockeyed for position in the new regime. See Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 196.
[119] It should be noted that Kabbah's government was also perceived to be responsible for the breakdown in the accord, as EO/Kamajor attacks on the RUF also continued after the agreement. Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-7.

The AFRC Coup

On 25 May 1997, Freetown was subjected to yet another military coup, forcing President Kabbah to set up a government-in exile in Guinea. This latest coup was carried out by junior SLA soldiers acting against both Kabbah's government and the senior military hierarchy; the latest act in a long trend of internal divisions in the RSLMF. Shortly after the coup took place, Riley contended that the putsch was again the product of a militariat of junior elements in the armed forces. As such, Riley concluded that the coup was 'wholly self-serving', and largely the result of particularly military grievances.[120] The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) junta that the coup established was certainly dominated by junior soldiers, with 17 of the 22 positions in the AFRC government occupied by NCOs. The AFRC installed Johnny Paul Koroma as its leader, an SLA major then in prison for his part in a previous putsch attempt. According to Koroma, the AFRC plotters stormed the prison and forced him to be their leader on pain of death, and subsequently had to be restrained from killing the SLA's senior officers.[121] Following the coup, Brigadier Khobe, a Nigerian officer serving Sierra Leone, observed that AFRC 'soldiers daily humiliated the entire Officer Corps. The situation was so bad that Corporals and other NCOs who initiated the mutiny demanded that officers should pay them compliments' such that the 'effort to overthrow the democratic order was only a by-product' of the internal tensions between officers and soldiers in the army.[122]

The proximate causes of the AFRC coup also tend to support Riley's "militariat" conclusion. Much of the tensions between junior and senior ranks in the SLA were the direct result of patrimonial (and indeed, outright corrupt) practices among the RSLMF's senior officers, which had caused significant discontent among their subordinates. Peter Penfold, the British High Commissioner in Sierra Leone at the time, later ascribed the coup to 'disaffection in the army, especially within the lower ranks, and the corruption in the army, especially within the senior ranks'. The spark which ignited the coup was an attempt by Kabbah to reign in senior RSLMF officers' patrimonial dealings. Although the military was drawing rice for its full establishment of

[120] Riley, *op. cit.*, p. 287.
[121] Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 202.
[122] *Ibid.*, pp. 201-2. Maxwell Khobe was seconded to the SLA from the Nigerian military, and later acted as its Chief of Staff and effective head.

15,000, it transpired that it only actually contained around half that number of active soldiers, with senior officers privately profiting from the unofficial surplus. According to Penfold, when Kabbah informed officers that he would be reducing the army's rice allocation in line with its actual strength, senior officers decided to reduce soldier's allocations rather than forego their lucrative trade in issued rice, sparking a mutiny on 17 May. The AFRC coup then followed.[123] The neo-patrimonial behaviour of SLA officers had evidently eroded the bonds of trust, authority and responsibility which obligated soldiers to their officers, resulting in a brittle institution. Ironically, it was precisely this sort of behaviour which Kabbah appears to have been attempting to reign in.

The AFRC coup similarly reflected a simmering tension between the SLPP government and the military over the role of the Kamajors. Under pressure from the IMF, Kabbah had sought to downsize the army from an establishment of 15,000 to around 4,000, prompting much resentment among the SLA. At the same time, the Kamajors were unofficially permitted to increase in strength to the region of 15-20,000 fighters, in order to provide the government with some sort of reliable military force.[124] The subsequent relationship between the SLA and Hinga Norman is illustrative. Penfold commented that, 'The army did not respect him and he did not trust the army'.[125] The AFRC claimed that their coup was the direct result of 'a pattern of marginalizing and disregarding the army' in favour of the Kamajor.[126] Johnny Paul Koroma himself cited the 'degrading step of imposing a 6 o'clock curfew on all soldiers in Southern and Eastern provincial towns and cities' – enforced by the Kamajor – as particularly inflammatory.[127] In March 1997, just a few months before the AFRC coup, this tension between the SLA and the Kamajor boiled over to such a degree that the army's Chief of Staff purportedly issued orders to the SLA to 'shoot-to-kill' Kamajor militiamen in areas of core interest to the SLA.[128] For their part, the Kamajor undeniably

[123] Lansana Gberie & Peter Penfold, 'An Interview with Peter Penfold', *African Affairs*, 104:414 (2005), pp. 119-20.
[124] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-9.
[125] Gberie & Penfold, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-20.
[126] Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, 'Position Statement of the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC)', 18 September 1999, online at http://www.sierra-leone.org/AFRC-RUF/AFRC-091899.html, accessed on 21/02/15.
[127] Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 201.
[128] Hoffman, *War Machines*, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-3; Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

posed a direct threat to the military. On 3 May 1997, for instance, the Kamajor launched an all-out assault on an SLA brigade headquarters in Kenema.[129]

Once in control, however, the AFRC invited the RUF to share power, prompting the sack of Freetown in a week-long orgy of looting, violence and rape carried out by sobels and rebels alike.[130] Keen argued that in reality, the ostensibly unlikely alliance between the AFRC and the RUF equated to little more than a transfer of 'covert collusion "up-country"…to the capital', driven largely by AFRC soldiers' desires to maintain profitable sobel activities.[131] In consequence, Gberie rejected Riley's militariat argument. Like Riley, Gberie found the root causes in the AFRC coup in the identity of the junior ranks of the SLA, but considered that it was the AFRC-RUF union after the coup which was defining. Gberie concluded that the junior ranks of the military were largely 'from a social category which, irrespective of their colours, remain criminally disposed and undisciplined. They are the so-called "lumpens" of Sierra Leone society.'[132] According to this view, military grievances were little more than a post hoc cover for the coupists, who found common cause with the RUF because they shared the same disenfranchised, anarchistic street-culture, rendering the coup essentially criminal rather than political in nature. Following the coup, the joint AFRC-RUF force referred to itself as the 'People's Army', and informally dubbed the looting of Freetown as 'Operation Pay Yourself'. The institutions of Sierra Leonean statehood were prominently targeted in the widespread lawlessness which followed the coup.[133] Similarly, Gberie noted that AFRC soldiers went about in civilian clothes rather than military fatigues, and tore the badges of rank from those still in uniform, such that the AFRC's conduct went beyond 'institutional instability: there was no longer any institution to speak of'.[134]

Yet, at the same time, Gberie noted that many of the politicians and a number of officers who found common cause with the AFRC junta (and may have helped to instigate it) were in fact associated with the previous ousted NPRC and APC regimes. These included the NPRC's former defence minister,

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[129] Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 200.
[130] Gberie, *op. cit.*, p. 153; Riley, *op. cit.*, p. 289-90.
[131] Adekeye Adebajo & David Keen, 'Sierra Leone', in Mats Berdal & Spyros Economides (eds.), *United Nations Interventionism, 1991-2004* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 249.
[132] Gberie, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
[133] *Ibid.*, p. 150-3.
[134] *Ibid.*, pp. 155-6.

Colonel Tom Nyuma, and the elder brother of Brigadier Bio.[135] Likewise, the RUF and AFRC elements of the 'People's Army' appeared less than cohesive, and in the first few weeks after the coup a number of firefights erupted at the junta's headquarters between the two factions.[136] Indeed, the AFRC was not itself politically united, first seeing off a counter-coup from senior officers a month into its rule, and again in November following internal conflict over diamond mining revenues.[137] Significantly, the AFRC coup was carried out to a background of discontent among elements of the military and their former political patrons at the prospect of increasing democratic accountability, parliament having revoked the promised immunity for former members of the NPRC in December 1996.[138] Gberie himself conceded that the AFRC was 'only a cruder replay of the NPRC rule' – though admittedly one in which sobel desires were exploited to the full.[139]

In October 1997, UN Security Council Resolution 1132 established an embargo on Sierra Leone and empowered ECOWAS to enforce it.[140] Nigeria increased its forces in Sierra Leone, and ECOWAS-led negotiations produced the Conakry Plan, under which the AFRC agreed to demobilise and allow President Kabbah to return to office. Yet again RUF and AFRC elements reneged on the agreement, and the CDF continued to fight on behalf of the SLPP administration in exile. Hostilities culminated in the recapture of Freetown by ECOMOG in March 1998.[141] President Kabbah was reinstated in Freetown, but ECOMOG proved unable to extend its influence outside the capital. By July 1998 the UN had established an Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) under Security Council Resolution 1181.[142] This had little immediate effect, and over Christmas 1998 the US evacuated international residents, and the British

[135] *Gberie, op. cit.*, pp. 157-8.
[136] *Ibid.*, p. 153.
[137] *Ibid.*, p. 160, 169.
[138] Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
[139] Gberie, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
[140] United Nations, 'UN Security Council Resolution 1132 on the Situation in Sierra Leone', 8 October 1997, online at http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N97/267/13/PDF/N9726713.pdf?OpenElement, accessed on 25/03/15.
[141] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-8; Hoffman, *War Machines*, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-7.
[142] United Nations, 'UN Security Council Resolution 1181 on the Situation in Sierra Leone', 13 July 1998, online at http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N98/203/28/PDF/N9820328.pdf?OpenElement, accessed 25/03/15.

Army also began to assess the crisis from a military perspective.[143] In January, AFRC-RUF elements again entered the suburbs of Freetown, skirmishing with Nigerian troops and loyalist SLA elements and committing widespread atrocities during the so-called 'Operation No Living Thing'.[144] The British government subsequently pledged £20 million to prop-up Kabbah's military position, but also pushed for the reopening of negotiations with the RUF. Yet again, the political situation in Sierra Leone was beholden to the military weakness and political unreliability of the RSLMF.

The Lomé Peace Accord, signed in July 1999, constituted a power-sharing agreement between Kabbah and the RUF, in which Sankoh was awarded the status of vice-president and retained control over diamond mining. Lomé thus reflected the continued weakness of the SLA and its inability to militarily defeat the RUF. Despite the favourable terms of the Lomé settlement, the RUF still proved loathe to end their campaign, and Sankoh was unperturbed by the arrival of the UN peacekeeping Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), which was authorised to enforce Lomé's implementation under UN Security Council Resolution 1270.[145] Kabbah's restoration to Freetown also saw a further splintering of AFRC factions, with elements loyal to Johnny Paul Koroma taking to the bush as the West Side Boys.[146] It is not clear if Sankoh still retained control over the RUF movement, but by early May 2000 the RUF was on the offensive again despite his arrest in Nigeria. Several hundred UN peacekeepers were either taken prisoner by the RUF or besieged in their compounds. The rebels once again threatened Freetown, precipitating widespread panic among the population. As the former colonial power, Britain then decided to intervene militarily; first to extract British citizens, and subsequently to stabilise Kabbah's democracy, militarily destroy the RUF, and rebuild Kabbah's army as the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF).

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[143] Brigadier David Richards, 'Operation Palliser', *Journal of the Royal Artillery*, 127:2 (2000), p. 10; General David Richards, *Taking Command* (London, Headline, 2014), p. 116.
[144] Caroline Hawley, 'A Country Torn by Conflict', *BBC News*, 12 January 1999, online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1999/01/99/sierra_leone/251377.stm, accessed 25/03/15; Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-47.
[145] United Nations, 'UN Security Council resolution 1270 on the Situation in Sierra Leone', 22 October 1999, online at http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/315/02/PDF/N9931502.pdf?OpenElement, accessed on 25/03/15.
[146] Mats Utas & Magnus Jörgel, 'The West Side Boys: Military Navigation in the Sierra Leone Civil War', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 46:3 (2008), pp. 487-511.

Conclusions

Neo-patrimonial systems are defined by the relationships between patrons and clients, or big men and their networks, through which power flows. Because the basis for generating political support in a neo-patrimonial system is fundamentally transactional, as Bøås has argued, 'the essence of politics is distribution of scarce resources'.[147] While these relationships are transactional and therefore fluid, in Sierra Leone these inter-dependent relationships of mutual loyalty and obligation have tended to overlap with dominant ethnic, geographic and class-based demographics, as patrimonial relationships grew out of familial, social and business networks. Patrimonial dynamics significantly pre-dated the founding of the colonial state, and largely survived its growth. Indeed, in some respects, the shift from patrimonialism to neo-patrimonialism, the latter defined by accommodation with the more formal institutions of the British imperial state, actually entrenched patrimonial tendencies.[148] While Grissom has rightly highlighted that such neo-patrimonial systems, which he calls 'limited-access orders' can be essentially stable (though frequently less than ordered),[149] the tensions between the demands of formal state institutions and the neo-patrimonial 'shadow state' in Sierra Leone ultimately proved destabilising, with significant implications for Sierra Leonean civil-military relations.[150]

In the years after independence, the nascent institutions of the RSLMF proved unable to resist high levels of patrimonial recruitment, particularly in the officer corps, which came to disproportionately reflect the social and ethnic groups that made up the ruling SLPP government. Moreover, the nature of neo-patrimonial recruitment meant that these officers not only held common cause with the incumbent regime, but owed personal allegiance to its big men, as their positions were reliant on their continued status as reliable political appointees. This led directly to the first military coup in Sierra Leone following the SLPP's poor electoral performance in 1967, undermining the democratic process.[151] The use of political appointees and ethnic stacking to bind the RSLMF to its

[147] Bøås, *op. cit.*, p. 698.
[148] Jörgel & Utas 'The Mano River Basin Area', *op. cit.*; Howard & Skinner, *op. cit.*; Bøås, *op. cit.*; Peters, *op. cit.*
[149] Grissom, *op. cit.*, pp. 276-9.
[150] Keen, *op. cit.*; Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, *op. cit.*; Chabal & Daloz, *op. cit.*
[151] Bebler, *op. cit.*

political big men is symptomatic of wider coup-proofing trends in civil-military relations.[152] Just as Nassif observed that ethnic stacking and coup-proofing has produced significant discontent and reduced military effectiveness in the Syrian military,[153] so it fostered divisions in the RSLMF officer corps. These served to further politicise the armed forces, and may have contributed to the counter-coup which eventually installed Siaka Stevens and the APC in power.[154] Yet, unlike other instances of coup-proofing, where ethnic stacking typically reflects a regime's pre-existing sectarian or authoritarian nature, in Sierra Leone it served to undermine military accountability, because the big men whose positions it supported were themselves still subject to democratically-initiated regime change.[155]

The political nature of military recruitment during the early post-colonial years effectively served to exclude certain groups from the political community, in a fashion reminiscent of Enloe and Krebs' theories.[156] The partisan direction of military recruitment was reversed during Stevens' rule, rendering the SLPP's army subservient to the APC regime; but the neo-patrimonial mechanisms through which this was achieved only intensified.[157] However, the absorption of senior officers into the APC, notably in the person of Stevens' successor General Momoh, did not render the RMSLF subservient to (one-party APC) civilian authority. Indeed, the creation of the SSD highlights the regime's discomfort at the reliability of its own armed forces, further precipitating their institutional stagnation. Instead, the politicisation of the armed forces under Stevens appears to have produced further divisions in the military, between patrimonial in-groups and out-groups, and between networked officers and alienated soldiers. On the one hand, the repeated coup attempts during the pre-war years reinforces Barany's assertion that military acquiescence to political change is vital to success; yet at the same time, it demonstrates that where military factions align with wider civilian interest groups, the military may still

[152] Quinlivan, *op. cit.*; Roessler, *op. cit.*; Laurence Louër, 'Sectarianism and Coup-Proofing Strategies in Bahrain', Journal of Strategic Studies, 36:2 (2013), pp. 245-260.
[153] Nassif, *op. cit.*
[154] Bebler, *op. cit.*
[155] Cf. Holger Albrecht, 'The Myth of Coup-Proofing: Risk and Instances of Military Coups d'État in the Middle East and North Africa, 1950-2013', *Armed Forces & Society*, 41:4 (2015), pp. 659-87.
[156] Enloe, *op. cit.*; Ronald R. Krebs, 'A School for the Nation? How Military Service Does Not Build Nations, and How It Might', *International Security*, 28:4 (2004), pp. 85-124; Krebs, 'One Nation under Arms?', *op. cit.*
[157] Keen, *op. cit.*

pose a threat to political leaders while becoming simultaneously impotent as an armed force.[158]

The same neo-patrimonial dynamics that undermined the quality of civil-military relations also significantly account for the root causes and brutal course of the Rebel War. Although the proximate cause lay in the neighbouring Liberian civil war, Keen and Richards have demonstrated how the slow decay of both the formal and 'shadow state' in Sierra Leone reduced the state's capacity to respond to the RUF incursion and, at least initially, helped foster armed opposition.[159] This assessment is well supported by sociological studies of wartime combatants, their motives and understandings of the conflict.[160] Indeed, the depth of insurgency the RUF incursion provoked must in part be attributed to the weak capacity of the RSLMF to effectively conduct security operations – itself a product of the politicised nature of the force. The sobel "sell-game" which developed during the war, leading to elements of the military effectively becoming yet another rebel faction, also reflects the nature of pre-war neo-patrimonial politics. As political power was based on economic relationships, in which political loyalty was fundamentally transactional, when the formal state collapsed, all that remained was a belief that politics was essentially a personal business.[161] The fact that soldiers' behaviour ultimately mirrored that of the RUF only serves to highlight the normative collapse of the RSLMF. Neo-patrimonial recruitment and promotion hollowed out the institutional influence of RSLMF training, discipline, and career progression, such that by 1998, the military had ceased to be a coherent body.

With regard to the relationship between RSLMF institutional decay and its political proclivities, the two wartime coups are particularly instructive. While the NPRC coup was initially a military affair, largely provoked by the poor state of the wartime effort and the alienation of front-line officers, it was nonetheless facilitated by the political divisions in the officer corps. Kandeh characterised this coup as the product of a militariat of junior soldiers, isolated from the benefits of the neo-patrimonial system. While the initial military grievances of

[158] Zoltan D. Barany, *The Soldier and the Changing State: Building Democratic Armies in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2012).
[159] Keen, *op. cit.*; Richards, *op. cit.*
[160] Coulter, *op. cit.;* Peters, *op. cit.*; Bøås & Dunn, *op. cit.*
[161] Bøås, *op. cit.*; Keen, *op. cit.*

the NPRC coup tend to support this assertion, when viewed in context the NPRC coup was simply the latest in a long line of politically-inspired military coups. The subsequent behaviour of the NPRC was certainly equally neo-patrimonial, despite their greater focus on effective military operations.[162] Although Riley has argued that the later AFRC coup followed the same militariat dynamic,[163] the character of the AFRC appears decidedly different. The AFRC received political backing from former NPRC and APC big men, who saw an opportunity to arrest their political obsolescence under Kabbah's democratically elected administration. However, the AFRC's key plotters, their common cause with the RUF and the sobel identities and behaviour they exhibited, lend credence to Gberie's more sociological reading.[164] That said, it is too easy to dismiss the violence of the AFRC-RUF 'People's Army' as merely the product of criminally disposed lumpen thugs. While sobels and rebels undoubtedly shared similar social backgrounds, wartime experiences and pre-war grievances, the AFRC did still articulate particular military identities (albeit while wearing jeans and t-shirts). This was especially true of their relationship with the Kamajor.

The military weakness of the RSLMF saw the consistent use of paramilitary, mercenary, and non-traditional security providers during the war. To a certain extent, this was simply an extension of pre-war trends in Sierra Leonean civil-military relations, which had already seen the creation of the SSD as a counter-balancing political paramilitary. Yet, the institutional collapse of the RSLMF during the war saw this practice expanded on an unpreceded scale, including by the military-dominated NPRC, who were equally unable to curb sobel indiscipline. To a degree, the use of private security contractors to prosecute the war reflected a wider Western trend in military outsourcing which developed in the late 1990s – and one which did not go without caution from scholars of democratic civil-military relations.[165] While EO proved highly effective in combatting the RUF, their economic stake in Sierra Leonean diamond concessions rendered them a destabilising force in Sierra Leonean civil-military relations. They had little objection to Julius Maada Bio's coup

[162] Kandeh, *op. cit.*
[163] Riley, *op. cit.*
[164] Gberie, *op. cit.*
[165] See P. W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of Privatized Military Industry* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2003); Deborah D. Avant, *The Market for Force: The Consequences of Privatizing Security* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005).

despite his obstruction of the democratic process. The relative stability achieved by EO operations proved short-lived, and rendered Kabbah's government beholden to external security providers – an error which enabled the AFRC coup.[166] In retrospect, the NPRC's recourse to EO serves to underline the institutional collapse of the RSLMF, while calling to mind Machiavelli's warning against the dubious loyalties of mercenary troops.[167]

In many respects, the rise of the Kamajor appears to have had far more pernicious consequences for Sierra Leonean civil-military relations. The strong links between the SLPP's political powerbase and Kamajor recruitment created a perception that the militia were effectively the SLPP's private army. This not only perpetuated the neo-patrimonial relationship between political power and private military force, but further aggravated relations between the remnants of the RSLMF and Kabbah's government.[168] Though Kabbah arguably had little choice but to rely on the CDF after the AFRC coup, the legacy of the CDF was to have a lasting impact on SLPP-RSLMF relations, calling into question claims by Ahram that warlordic militias can provide the basis for more fundamental national development.[169]

At the point of British intervention, the culture of the RSLMF was defined by neo-patrimonialism. Pre-war civil-military relations were shaped by neo-patrimonialism, and had remade the internal practices of the pre-war military in the same image, subverting institutional identities for political ones, and shaping Sierra Leonean soldiers' wartime behaviour accordingly. By 2000, the RSLMF was a divided and ineffective shell. Its officers and soldiers were split along political lines between supporters of Kabbah's government, those affiliated to the NPRC or AFRC, and those former soldiers who had effectively become independent bands of sobels. Not only had democratic civil-military relations ceased to be in any conventional sense, so had the military as a unified institution. Moreover, political rivalries between elements of the RSLMF and the Kamajor effectively rendered President Kabbah's position untenable without

[166] Shearer, *op. cit.*
[167] Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, Peter Bondanella (ed. & trans.), (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005).
[168] Riley, *op. cit.*; Gberie, *op. cit.*
[169] Ariel I. Ahram, 'Learning to Live with Militias: Toward a Critical Policy on State Frailty', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 5:2 (2011), pp. 175-92. For a greater exploration of the countervailing argument, see Kimberly Marten, *Warlords: Strong-Arm Brokers in Weak States* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2015).

international aid. This situation was substantially the product of the neo-patrimonial decay of the RSLMF under successive pre-war governments, and it was this neo-patrimonial culture which later British-led change attempted to address in the Sierra Leonean military. The process of externally-led change, and the successes and limitations experienced in addressing this neo-patrimonial culture in the Sierra Leonean military, are examined in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 of this thesis. The next chapter, however, will first turn to the politics behind British intervention in the Rebel War. This, together with the neo-patrimonial military culture this chapter has examined, defined the landscape of post-intervention military change in Sierra Leone.

5. The Politics of British Intervention in Sierra Leone

This chapter will examine the politics behind British intervention in the Rebel War and its impact on post-conflict military change in Sierra Leone. The exportation of Western civil-military norms by interventionists is inevitably subject to the intersection of international and local political agendas. Grissom's study of capacity building in the ANA argued that it was the misalignment between Western values and local political agendas that ultimately prevented genuine change.[1] Analogously, even in cases of national military innovation, this interaction between ground-level change and strategic or metropolitan priorities has been crucial to success. Harkness and Hunzeker observed that the British military's ability to adapt during counter-insurgency operations in the Cameroons in the early 1960s was primarily limited by the British Government, which concluded that the benefits of local change were outweighed by the political and opportunity costs of continuing to invest in a strategically marginal periphery.[2] Specifically examining externally-led defence reform, Cleary likewise observed that the strategic reality perceived by interventionists and hosts were frequently divergent, creating a fundamental tension. In British praxis, for example, Cleary found that the imperatives which shaped local national civil-military interactions were often significantly different from the strategic concerns which preoccupied British intervention.[3] Marten has similarly argued that while patrimonial armed groups can be incorporated into state security apparatus for counter-insurgency, the mutual exclusivity of warlordic political mores and the centralising vision of the legal-rational Weberian state may nonetheless hinder long-term state transformation.[4] Indeed, these dynamics form a central criticism of liberal state-building more widely, namely, that liberal interventions privilege Western agendas over local agency, resulting in inherently limited outcomes.[5]

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[1] Adam Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars: NATO Advisors and Military Adaptation in the Afghan National Army, 2001-2011', in Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga & James A. Russell (eds.), *Military Adaptation in Afghanistan* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 263-87.
[2] Kristen A. Harkness & Michael Hunzeker, 'Military Maladaptation: Counterinsurgency and the Politics of Failure', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 38:6 (2015), pp. 777-800.
[3] Laura R. Cleary, 'Lost in Translation: The Challenge of Exporting Models of Civil-Military Relations', *PRISM*, 3:2 (2012), pp. 23-6.
[4] Kimberly Marten, 'Patronage Versus Professionalism in New Security Institutions', *PRISM*, 2:4 (2011), pp. 83-6.
[5] See for example, Augustine S. J. Park, 'Peacebuilding, the Rule of Law and the Problem of Culture: Assimilation, Multiculturalism, Deployment', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*,

Undoubtedly, the British military deployment to Sierra Leone in 2000 altered the trajectory of the Rebel War, drawing the UK into a prolonged state-building endeavour in which the reform of the RSLMF featured prominently. Yet, the strategic rationale behind British intervention in Sierra Leone is less than clear. Writing shortly after the intervention began, Williams concluded that 'Britain's geostrategic interests and investments in Sierra Leone are negligible', and indeed, the initial mandate of British forces was simply to evacuate British citizens.[6] Instead, the British military commander on the ground, Brigadier David Richards, has been charged with unilaterally leading British foreign policy "from the ground up" – a perception which, in retirement, Richards has himself been happy to perpetuate.[7] Certainly, when the British CDS arrived in Sierra Leone to assess the situation during the initial intervention, known as Operation Palliser, he replied to press questions about British intentions simply: 'if we had a plan, we wouldn't tell you.'[8] Consequently, subsequent British military officers serving in Sierra Leone have described Operation Palliser as 'essentially altruistic and conducted for humanitarian motives'.[9] Humanitarian agendas should not be dismissed, but in contrast, scholars have tended to view the intervention as a product of converging international and domestic pressures acting on the British Government.[10] Yet, it is not clear that this convergence remained consistent throughout the British effort in Sierra Leone. Varisco, for instance, contended that while British intervention was initially reactive and driven by events on the ground – perhaps because of an absence of defining strategic interests – this period helped give form to nascent SSR policy, which itself later provided a strategic guide for subsequent reforms.[11]

4:4 (2010), pp. 413-32; Richard Caplan (ed.), *Exit Strategies and State Building* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012); David Roberts, 'Everyday Legitimacy and Postconflict States: Introduction', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 7:1 (2013), pp. 1-10.

[6] Paul Williams, 'Fighting for Freetown: British Military Intervention in Sierra Leone', *Contemporary Security Policy*, 22:3 (2001), p. 154.

[7] General David Richards, *Taking Command* (London, Headline, 2014).

[8] Imperial War Museum Film Archives BFA 1392, 'Operation Palliser, Sierra Leone, May 2000 (Tape 27)', Interview with CDS Guthrie on arrival in Sierra Leone.

[9] Lieutenant Colonel Harold Simpson MBE, 'UK Sponsored Stabilisation and Reform in Sierra Leone 2002-2013: A Unique Case or a Template for Future Intervention(s)?', Sandhurst Occasional Papers No. 19 (Camberley, 2014), p. 8.

[10] Williams, *op. cit.*; Richard Connaughton, 'The Mechanics and Nature of British Interventions into Sierra Leone (2000) and Afghanistan (2001–2002)', *Civil Wars*, 5:2 (2002), pp. 77-95.

[11] Andrea Edoardo Varisco, 'The Influence of Research and Local Knowledge in British-led Security Sector Reform Policy in Sierra Leone', *Conflict, Security & Development*, 14:1 (2014), pp. 89-123.

If the UK did not possess particular strategic interests in Sierra Leone, what motives did impel its intervention in the Rebel War? How did these interact with local political agendas to shape the nature of wartime and post-war defence reform? If the escalation of British commitment to Sierra Leone resulted from a divergence between British officers on the ground and their political masters in Whitehall, to what extent were the later policies of the British-led IMATT affected by factionalism among British government actors? And how did these intra-UK dynamics interact with the complex neo-patrimonial factions in Sierra Leonean politics, or indeed other international actors in Sierra Leone? As Woodward observed of civil war, the causes that lead to conflict are often transformed during the fighting, such that the motives that govern belligerents at war's end can look very different to those which initially impelled them to take up arms.[12] This concept might equally be applied to intervention, such that changes in British strategic imperatives during the decade of post-conflict defence reform must also be considered. This chapter will examine the expansion of British involvement in Sierra Leone, its motives and changing rationales, from the run-up to Operation Palliser to the eventual draw-down of IMATT. It seeks to understand how British political, strategic and bureaucratic pressures affected the course of IMATT's interactions with the RSLAF, and in so doing, shaped cultural change in the Sierra Leonean military.

Lomé and British intervention before Operation Palliser

Operation Palliser was not the British military's first foray into Sierra Leone during the Rebel War. Yet the record of previous British interventions in the country does not suggest a pattern of British political and military commitment to its former colony. Instead, it was characterised by a desire not to become substantively involved on the ground. Although the British Government had been involved in the Abuja Accords, subsequently providing a small number of British military trainers,[13] it was the AFRC coup which largely acted as a catalyst to wider British involvement in the country. In response to the AFRC-RUF junta, the UN established an arms embargo on Sierra Leone via Security Council

[12] Susan L. Woodward, 'Do the Root Causes of Civil War Matter? On Using Knowledge to Improve Peacebuilding Interventions', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 1:2 (June 2007), pp. 143-170.
[13] Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, *Coming Back From the Brink in Sierra Leone: A Memoir* (Accra, EPP Books, 2010), p. 64; David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (Oxford, James Currey, 2005), p. 204.

Resolution 1132 in October 1997, to be enforced by ECOWAS.[14] Nigeria increased its forces in Sierra Leone, and ECOWAS-led negotiations produced the Conakry Plan, under which the AFRC agreed to demobilise and allow President Kabbah to return to office. Again, RUF and AFRC elements reneged on the agreement, and hostilities culminated in the recapture of Freetown by ECOMOG in March 1998.[15] However, subsequent events on the ground forced the British Government into an ever greater commitment in Sierra Leone.

During Kabbah's time in exile, the British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold, continued to support Kabbah. This culminated in the so-called "arms-to-Africa" scandal, which saw Penfold replaced and the British Government embarrassed, but also had the unintended consequence of drawing the UK further into the Rebel War. After the AFRC coup, the SLPP government-in-exile kept pressure on the AFRC-RUF 'People's Army' through the CDF militias, which fought against sobel activity in the south. At the same time, the British private security firm Sandline International was hired to provide military support to the CDF in an attempt to oust the AFRC. Sandline was run by a former British Army officer, Tim Spicer, and was responsible for providing a helicopter and Bulgarian-made small arms to Kamajor forces in a parallel to the NPRC's use of Executive Outcomes; an arrangement which Penfold was aware of. In the event, Sandline's arms shipment arrived after President Kabbah was reinstated in Freetown by ECOMOG, although the Nigerian-led force proved unable to project power outside the capital.[16] However, the role of Sandline and the relationship between the mercenary company and the British Government via Penfold nonetheless unravelled into a public scandal, after the arms shipment was seized in Nigeria. The supply of arms to Kabbah's exiled regime appeared to contravene the UN arms embargo under Resolution 1132, which the UK had helped to draft. Moreover, it was alleged that the operation was

[14] United Nations, 'UN Security Council Resolution 1132 on the Situation in Sierra Leone', 8 October 1997, online at http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N97/267/13/PDF/N9726713.pdf?OpenElement, accessed on 25/03/15.
[15] Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-8; Danny Hoffman, *The War Machines: Young Men and Violence in Sierra Leone and Liberia* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2011), pp. 43-7.
[16] Lansana Gberie & Peter Penfold, 'An Interview with Peter Penfold', *African Affairs*, 104:414 (2005), pp. 117-125.

funded by bankers with mining interests in Sierra Leone, something reminiscent of EO's previous involvement.[17]

The "arms-to-Africa" scandal was particularly damaging for New Labour, which had made a high-profile domestic commitment to an "ethical foreign policy", because it emerged that the Foreign Office may have tacitly supported the use of British mercenaries in a pro-Kabbah counter-coup despite the UN arms embargo. Foreign Secretary Robin Cook subsequently maintained that ministers were never briefed and the Foreign Office had not officially acceded to the enterprise; a position upheld by an independent British Government investigation.[18] However, emails were produced between Penfold and the FCO, and between in-country British officers and the MOD, and Penfold maintained that the Whitehall establishment had tacitly supported the plan, scapegoating him when it unexpectedly became public.[19] Either way, the "arms-to-africa" affair was symptomatic of the lack of British interest in intervening in the Rebel War. Connaughton concluded that 'the [British] government had been hoist by its own petard'; it had little appetite for intervention, but equally could not be publically seen to support "unethical" mercenary responses that might have avoided the need for a larger UK commitment later on.[20]

Despite Kabbah's return to Freetown, a conclusion to the Rebel War remained elusive. In fact, Kabbah's restoration to Freetown only served to splinter the AFRC further, with elements formerly loyal to Johnny Paul Koroma taking to the bush as the West Side Boys.[21] In a continued sign of the troubled relationship between the SLPP and the military, Kabbah's government promptly arrested senior RSLMF officers who had remained in Sierra Leone during the AFRC interregnum, and publically executed 24 after a brief trial which

[17] 'Q&A: Arms-to-Africa Scandal', *BBC News*, 10 May 1999, online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/90526.stm, accessed on 24/07/16.
[18] 'Arms-to-Africa: The Repercussions', *BBC News*, online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1998/05/98/arms_to_africa_row/140570.stm, accessed on 24/07/16; Sir Thomas Legg & Sir Robin Ibbs, 'Report of the Sierra Leone Arms Investigation' (London, 27 July 1998), online at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/235405/1016.pdf, accessed on 24/07/16.
[19] Gberie & Penfold, *op. cit.*
[20] Connaughton, 'The Mechanics and Nature of British Interventions', *op. cit.*, p. 84.
[21] Mats Utas & Magnus Jörgel, 'The West Side Boys: Military Navigation in the Sierra Leone Civil War', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 46:3 (2008), pp. 487-511.

international observers considered less than just.[22] In July 1998, the UN established an Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL) under Security Council Resolution 1181 in recognition of the poor security situation, but this had little effect.[23] Over Christmas 1998, the US evacuated international residents and the British Army also began to conduct contingency planning.[24] In January 1999, the self-styled 'People's Army' re-entered Freetown, skirmishing with ECOMOG and loyalist troops and committing widespread atrocities in their so-called 'Operation No Living Thing'.[25] Although the British government provided £20 million in support of Kabbah's government, it also pushed for new negotiations with the RUF. Sierra Leone was again beholden to the military incapacity of the RSLMF, but this time exacerbated by a lack of international commitment to the country's strife.

Signed in July 1999, The Lomé Peace Accord consisted of a power-sharing agreement between President Kabbah and the RUF, in which Sankoh gained equivalent status to the vice-president and control over diamond mining. The international community hoped that by bringing the RUF into the government, further violence would be avoided. However, the Accord was criticised even at the time for rewarding the brutality of war criminals like Sankoh.[26] In reality, Kabbah had little choice but to sue for a peace, as the Nigerian will to sustain his position was eroding rapidly and no other country was willing to deploy significant numbers of troops in his defence. In part, Lomé thus reflected the continued weakness of the SLA and its inability to provide any real security, but also the Western transience that had characterised the "arms-to-Africa" scandal. Britain led the International Contact Group that produced the

[22] 'Twenty-Four Soldiers Executed', *BBC News*, 19 October 1998, online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/196711.stm, accessed on 27/05/16; '24 Linked to Coup Executed in Sierra Leone', *New York Times*, 20 October 1998, online at http://www.nytimes.com/1998/10/20/world/24-linked-to-coup-executed-in-sierra-leone.html, accessed on 27/05/16; Sierra Leone Web online news archive, October 1998, online at http://www.sierra-leone.org/Archives/slnews1098.html, accessed on 27/05/16.
[23] United Nations, 'UN Security Council Resolution 1181 on the Situation in Sierra Leone', 13 July 1998, online at http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N98/203/28/PDF/N9820328.pdf?OpenElement, accessed 25/03/15.
[24] Brigadier David Richards, 'Operation Palliser', *Journal of the Royal Artillery*, 127:2 (2000), pp. 10-5; Richards, *Taking Command*, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
[25] Caroline Hawley, 'A Country Torn by Conflict', BBC News, 12 January 1999, online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1999/01/99/sierra_leone/251377.stm, accessed 25/03/15; Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-47.
[26] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: Time for a New Military and Political Strategy', Africa Report No. 28 (Freetown/London/Brussels, 11 April 2001), p. ii.

Lomé agreement, and arguably, by seeking to bring the RUF into the diplomatic fold rather than intervene militarily, the Lomé agreement better reflected the British government's desire not to intervene rather than any genuine rapprochement in the country.

The Lomé Agreement required the disarmament of the RSLMF in toto alongside the CDF and RUF, and envisioned a military integration programme to build a new national army from former combatants of all factions. In support of this, the British government deployed a small joint team of civil and military advisers to advise the Sierra Leonean government on the reform of its MOD, under the title of the Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme (SILSEP).[27] Yet the British Government's limited commitment to Sierra Leone was reflected in the resources it allocated to the SILSEP programme. The team initially consisted of three people, and was directed by DFID to conduct a study into how the Sierra Leonean MOD might be reformed to incorporate civilian and military elements.[28] The task was vast. The team's military adviser, Colonel Mike Dent, arrived in Freetown to find the MOD lacked window panes and electricity, and its staff consisted of only a few employees. Constitutionally, the President served as the Minister of Defence, leaving the ministry managed day-to-day by the Deputy Minister, Chief (and retired captain) Sam Hinga Norman, who also ran the CDF. The civilian component consisted of two civil servants whose main duties were to sign cheques for the CDS, alongside a typist and a cleaner. The armed forces were *de facto* run by military officers in the separate defence headquarters,[29] such that one Sierra Leonean civil servant described the MOD as simply 'a "clearing-house" for all military financial matters'.[30]

Initially, Kabbah appears to have been equally guarded in his support for British-led defence reform in Sierra Leone, perhaps in recognition of the uncertain British commitment. SILSEP's planning process initially involved visiting all the major Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) ministries, but despite

[27] Varisco, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-3.
[28] Interview with Colonel (retd.) Mike Dent CBE, SILSEP and IMATT Adviser to the Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence 1999-2002, conducted in Worcester on 20 November 2015.
[29] *Ibid*.; Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007* (Birmingham, GFN-SSR, 2009), pp. 46-7. The imbalance between MOD and Defence HQ was arguably aggravated by the influx of British personnel into the Defence Headquarters following intervention. See *ibid.*, pp. 59-60.
[30] Al-Hassan Kharamoh Kondeh, 'Formulating Sierra Leone's Defence White Paper', in Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson (eds.), *Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone 1997 - 2007: Views from the Front Line* (Berlin, Lit, 2010), p. 150.

being tasked to make recommendations on MOD redevelopment, Colonel Dent recalled that the team could not visit the RSLMF Headquarters. At the time, Nigerian forces were providing significant military support to the RSLMF, including providing a number of its staff officers and its Chief of Staff, Nigerian Brigadier Maxwell Khobe. In Dent's view:

> 'The President didn't want to upset Maxwell Khobe. He thought it was too delicate, and he really didn't want the Nigerians to know what was going on. I think there was political pressure put on him by the UK Government to ensure we were not interfered with by anybody…but he didn't want to upset the Nigerians by allowing, or letting them be involved in our study'.[31]

While this position displayed a degree of reticence on Kabbah's part, it also a reflected lack of trust in the Nigerian military. Certainly the Nigerian-dominated ECOMOG had gained a reputation for corruption and pillage, earning it the epithet "Every Car Or Moving Object Gone" in neighbouring Liberia.[32] Similarly, in October 1999, UN Security Council Resolution 1270 created the UN peacekeeping Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to enforce Lomé's implementation,[33] but the Nigerian component was precipitously withdrawn after a spat with the Indian force commander, during which it emerged that Nigerian troops had been trading weapons with the RUF for personal profit.[34]

This balancing act between the Nigerians, the British and GOSL complicated SILSEP's work. Dent recalled one incident in which the SILSEP team managed to persuade Khobe to let them accompany him to a meeting with AFRC elements seeking to be reincorporated into the RSLMF under the Lomé Agreement, only to find themselves abandoned in hostile territory after negotiations broke down.[35] Nonetheless, SILSEP did manage to draft recommendations for defence reform. In an indication of how the British commitment to Sierra Leone was increasingly led by advisers on the ground, these extended well beyond SILSEP's original mandate. SILSEP had first produced an expansive root-and-branch review of the Sierra Leonean defence

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[31] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*
[32] See Christopher Tuck, '"Every Car Or Moving Object Gone": The ECOMOG Intervention in Liberia', *African Studies Quarterly*, 4:1 (2000), p. 9.
[33] United Nations, 'UN Security Council resolution 1270 on the Situation in Sierra Leone', 22 October 1999, online at http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/315/02/PDF/N9931502.pdf?OpenElement, accessed on 25/03/15.
[34] Adekeye Adebajo & David Keen, 'Sierra Leone', in Mats Berdal & Spyros Economides (eds.), United Nations Interventionism, 1991-2004 (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 256-7, pp. 263-4.
[35] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*

sector based on advisers' prior experience of the UK defence review process, which included drafting new defence missions and tasks for the RSLMF. Kabbah's government were apparently content to let the British remake the armed forces as they saw fit; not least because they had more pressing domestic priorities. DFID were less convinced once it became apparent that SILSEP's proposals effectively amounted to reforming the entire RSLMF, not just the MOD. Nonetheless, the plans were grudgingly approved by London.[36]

Implementation, however, was overtaken by events on the ground. Despite the favourable terms of the Lomé settlement, the RUF still proved unwilling to abandon violence. Sankoh was unperturbed by the expansion of the UNAMSIL force and mission to 11,000 troops, jibing in local papers that, 'The UN is free to send 20,000 troops to Sierra Leone, but who would scare a pregnant woman with a dead penis?'[37] Whether Sankoh still retained control over the RUF is unclear, especially after his arrest in Nigeria. Nonetheless, by early May 2000 the RUF was on the offensive again, over-running significant elements of the UN force. The RUF were again poised to sack Freetown. Britain then decided to intervene, ostensibly to extract British citizens, but subsequently to defend Kabbah's democracy and stabilise the country, rebuilding the RSLMF as the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) in the process.

Both the "arms-for-Africa" scandal and the Lomé Accord, which in many respects was just a re-run of the previous (failed) Abuja Agreement, reflected the UK's lack of strategic interest in intervention Sierra Leone. However, by declining to use hired proxies and instead publically committing to a diplomatic solution, the British Government found itself drawn into the Rebel War, as manifested by the deployment of the SILSEP team, and by the provision of limited financial aid to prop-up Kabbah's military position. As the SILSEP team's initial planning highlights, the implementation of British political commitments on the ground were shaped by the competing agendas of other local actors, both Sierra Leonean and regional. Once in country, the SILSEP team inexorably drew the UK into a more expansive institutional rebuilding project in the

[36] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*
[37] Chris McGreal, 'Infighting sets back UN peace effort', *The Guardian*, 15 May 2000, p. 11, online at *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Guardian and The Observer*, http://search.proquest.com/hnpguardianobserver/history/fromBasicHomePage?, accessed on 24/03/15.

absence of other viable options – a dynamic later paralleled during Operation Palliser.

Operation Palliser

British support for the Lomé Agreement betrays the UK's desire not to become embroiled in Sierra Leone's Rebel War. Given the apparent lack of British national interests at stake, Williams has argued that Operation Palliser was largely the product of New Labour's moral and ideological policy commitments. Prima facie, intervention was precipitated by the likelihood that the RUF would overrun Freetown and thus pose a direct threat to British citizens. Williams argues that this eventuality also provoked a wider humanitarian impulse to 'do something' about the growing crisis; particularly given that prior interventions by both EO and (to a lesser degree) ECOMOG had demonstrated the utility of force in such a situation. The renewed RUF threat also accentuated New Labour's desire to support Kabbah's fledgling democracy in principle, and in so doing live up to pledges of an "ethical" foreign policy. Finally, the urgent need to prop-up the ailing UN force, and with it the credibility of UN peacekeeping in general, provided a more practical concern. For Williams, the convergence between the British Government's political attitudes and the declining situation on the ground in Sierra Leone accounts for the initiation of Operation Palliser, and likewise explains the rapid transition from a Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) to a stabilisation campaign with longer-term state-building implications.[38]

Williams' interpretation clearly holds some water. Humanitarian motives can translate into strategic imperatives for democratic governments when they catch the public imagination. As Connaughton argued, by 'responding to demands to "do something", conscience then translates into an interest as a government elects to appease electors.'[39] Moreover, Tony Blair appears to have had a particular moral affinity for Sierra Leone. His father had lectured in Freetown in the 1960s, and perhaps more profoundly, Kampfner has suggested that the plight of the country chimed with Blair's evangelical Christian morals.[40] Yet, British Government rhetoric during the early phases of Operation Palliser

[38] Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
[39] Connaughton, 'The Mechanics and Nature of British Interventions', *op. cit.*, p. 79.
[40] John Kampfner, *Blair's Wars* (London, The Free Press, 2004), pp. 73-7.

deliberately accentuated the protection of British citizens rather than the righteousness of Britain's moral cause. Moreover, according to Williams, the mood of the nation was decidedly uninterested in the fate of Sierra Leone. One Guardian commentary suggested that 'Sierra Leone is more likely to be mistaken for a car model off a Ford assembly line, and as to the competing virtues of rebel leader Foday Sankoh, or President Kabbah, fewer than one in 100,000 could even pretend to have an opinion.'[41] Intervention was not foisted upon the government by the weight of public outrage; rather, public opinion in the UK appeared to view New Labour as caught off-guard by the declining situation. Newspaper editorials published as British troops deployed instead described the government's simultaneous preoccupations with the situation in Northern Ireland, Kosovo, and in the personal case of the Prime Minister, the imminent birth of his youngest son.[42]

New Labour undoubtedly did aspire to a moral foreign policy, as reflected in Blair's Chicago speech the year before. Nonetheless, as Dorman has rightly observed, Blair rose to power on the back of domestic agendas, and the 1997 New Labour manifesto contained little hint of overseas 'adventurism'. At best, therefore, any ideological commitment to intervention in Sierra Leone should be seen as a corollary of the British campaigns in Bosnia and Kosovo, in that these earlier interventions gave the government confidence in the use of force abroad.[43] Indeed, the British Government's preferred course of action was to try to expedite the deployment of an additional six UN battalions rather than deploy troops itself.[44] Thus, while intervention may have chimed with New Labour's political rhetoric, it can hardly be seen as the preferred strategic option. Instead, Connaughton has taken a more realist perspective, viewing intervention as forced on the British government by a convergence of diplomatic and domestic factors. As the former colonial power, the UK was considered to hold some degree of obligation for Sierra Leone in the eyes of the international community. Consequently, British policy options appear to have been limited by the UN

[41] Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 157.
[42] Ewen MacAskill & Richard Norton-Taylor, 'Flawed Evidence Led to "Mission Creep": The Decision to Send British Troops in was Taken Amid Terrible Confusion, Whitehall Sources Say', *The Guardian*, 16 May 2000, p. 4, online at *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Guardian and The Observer,* accessed on 22/02/15.
[43] Andrew M. Dorman, ***Blair's Successful War: British Military Intervention in Sierra Leone*** (Abingdon, Routledge, 2009), pp. 14-28.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

Security Council's view, conveyed to the British Ambassador and followed up by messages from the UN Secretary-General and the US and French Ambassadors, that the situation in Sierra Leone was a British responsibility.[45]

In many respects, the British government had backed itself into a corner. Internationally, the UK had been instrumental in negotiating the Lomé Accords with all the legitimacy these had conferred on the RUF, and these were now in tatters. Domestically, New Labour had traded on its ethical stance on foreign affairs and the democratic credentials of President Kabbah. In fact, only 25 per cent of the Sierra Leonean population had been able to vote in the presidential elections – the remainder living in rebel-held territory – and even then Kabbah had only received 60 per cent of the vote in a second-round run-off.[46] Nevertheless, after criticism at the slow government response to floods in Mozambique in February 2000 and the "arms-to-Africa" scandal, it seems the British Government felt compelled to make good on its rhetoric. The British strategic rationale for Operation Palliser can, therefore, be seen as a reluctant response to previous policy failures, necessitated by the limited remaining options which conformed to the New Labour government's policy stances.

Given this, Operation Palliser is as much a reflection of the failure of Lomé, and in particular the UN and ECOMOG's inability to enforce it, as anything else. The initial UN monitoring force had been dismissed by ECOMOG officers as 'here on picnic and holiday. I wish we could open the beaches for them to sun-tan and enjoy their dollars.'[47] Though perhaps better paid than ECOMOG, the subsequent UNAMSIL force was a rather motley collection of under-prepared contingents. In Bo, for example, the garrison consisted of soldiers from 26 different nationalities. Although UNAMSIL did enjoy the mandate and rules of engagement that should have allowed them to conduct offensive operations against the RUF, it is evident that most contributing countries did not envisage their contingents aggressively warfighting under a blue helmet. Even the UN commander, Indian Major General Vijay Jetley, conceded that many contingents 'did not come up to the mark and were an embarrassment both to the countries and to the UNAMSIL'.[48] Jetley himself

[45] Dorman, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-6.
[46] Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
[47] Adebajo & Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 256.
[48] *Ibid.*, p. 261.

later faced public criticism, with Brigadier David Richards subsequently describing him as a 'well-meaning' but 'extremely cautious UN commander who was fixated about not losing a single Indian soldier on this operation.' Both Jetley and Richards' remarks thus reflect the internally divided state of UNAMSIL, in which national priorities frequently trumped its UN mandate. In his memoirs, Richards later described the mentality at the UNAMSIL HQ during Operation Palliser as having 'an air of Saigon 1975 about the place – panic and mental paralysis all at once.'[49] Kabbah's main regional backer, Nigeria, was no more reliable. With the death of Nigerian leader General Sani Abacha and the election of Olusegun Obasanjo in 1999, Nigeria began to withdraw its ECOMOG contingent. The public would not accept the costs of intervention – $1 million a day and significant numbers of casualties – as the generals had.[50]

The shortcomings of the UN mission, while potentially providing a strategic rationale for British intervention, were to have a more profound impact on British thinking at the operational level. The dominant British narrative of Operation Palliser emphasises Brigadier Richards' personal agency in the transition from NEO to a limited stabilisation campaign, and shortly afterwards Brigadier Richards felt the need to stave off criticism that the campaign on the ground had been effectively 'driving the British Government's policy'.[51] David Richards later rose to Chief of the Defence Staff and retired as a Member of the House of Lords; a position which has allowed him to subsequently state that during Palliser he actively decided 'to ignore my orders from London and intervene militarily in the civil war'.[52]

British military activity during the initial stages of Operation Palliser was certainly reactive to events on the ground. A reconnaissance team led by Brigadier Richards arrived in Sierra Leone on 6 May 2000, subsequently becoming the core of the Joint Task Force HQ (JTFHQ) during Palliser. Richards found the situation in Freetown fragile, and shortly after requested the deployment of a battalion of the Parachute Regiment. During the night of 8 May, a large demonstration took place in Freetown during which Sankoh's house was

[49] Richards, *Taking Command*, *op. cit.*, p. 134, p. 139.
[50] Adebajo & Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-4.
[51] Major General David Richards, 'Expeditionary Operations: Sierra Leone – Lessons for the Future', *World Defence Systems: The International Review of Defence Acquisition Issues*, 3:2 (July 2001), p. 136.
[52] Richards, *Taking command*, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

sacked and his bodyguards shot dead 21 protestors. It was this incident that precipitated the initiation of the NEO, eventually seeing 442 entitled persons evacuated to Dakar, 299 within the first 48 hours.[53] It was not until the following day that Brigadier Richards received the first set of formal orders from London confirming the evacuation. Richards recalled that these orders were 'exclusively concerned with the conduct of an emergency evacuation. They had nothing in them about helping the UN and nothing about creating a military alliance to help Kabbah'.[54] Instead, the British military focused on shoring up the GOSL defence of Freetown using a collection of loosely pro-Government armed groups coordinated by British officers, nick-named the 'Unholy Alliance'.[55] Shortly after Palliser, Richards wrote in a technical military journal that his decision to initiate a stabilisation operation was the product of an absence of clear direction from London, which necessitated 'Identifying early on…HMG's intent'.[56] He later contended that, 'Translating strategic intent is…[a] key operational level role' and that in order to maintain the necessary tempo a commander 'must feel that he has the freedom to work within strategic intent and not be required to wait for Whitehall machinery to function over issues of minor strategic significance'.[57]

Dismissing formal orders as 'barely relevant to what we were doing',[58] as Richards does in his memoirs, is not the same as translating strategic intent into timely action. Nor can becoming embroiled in a foreign civil war be seen as a matter of minor strategic significance. Nevertheless, Richards' reading of "strategic intent" – in contradiction of specific orders – was supported by a number of factors. The decision to deploy the Amphibious Ready Group from the outset permitted significant tactical flexibility and indicated that the British Government was willing to commit itself to more than a NEO. Moreover, the Prime Minister, the Defence Secretary and the Foreign Secretary had all delegated decision-making powers to Brigadier Richards and the British High Commissioner on the morning of 7 May. Thus, to the extent that Richards drove

[53] Interview with Keith Biddle, Inspector General of Police of the Sierra Leone Police 1999-2004, and retired British Assistant Inspector of Constabulary, conducted in Cheshire on 9 July 2015; Richards, 'Operation Palliser', *op. cit.*, p. 11.
[54] Richards, *Taking Command*, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
[55] *Ibid.*, pp. 141-2; Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*; Interview with Major General (retd.) Jerry Thomas CB DSO, JTFHQ and Colonel, General Staff of the SLAF during Operation Palliser, conducted in Exeter on 13 January 15. Then a Colonel, Thomas was responsible for co-ordinating the 'Unholy Alliance'.
[56] Richards, 'Operation Palliser', *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[57] Richards, 'Expeditionary Operations', *op. cit.*, p. 136.
[58] Richards, *Taking Command*, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

strategic priorities, he was authorised to do so within certain limits by his government.[59] Richards had briefed Robin Cook on the developing situation in Sierra Leone at Sydney Airport in September 1999, and consequently felt he had a good understanding of the FCO perspective.[60] When it became apparent that this meant direct involvement in the civil war, instead of recalling Richards, the British CDS personally visited Sierra Leone over the weekend 13-14 May. Sir Charles Guthrie could have sacked Richards – and some expected him to do so – but instead he confirmed Richards' course of action.[61]

Paralysis in Whitehall provided both the need and the opportunity for Richards to interpret government intent as he saw fit. Indeed, the Prime Minister's personal involvement in Operation Palliser decision making appears to have been limited. Blair seems to have been initially persuaded into the deployment by the Defence Secretary, Geoff Hoon, and Robin Cook, with additional pressure coming from the head of the DFID, Clare Short, on the basis that once deployed, premature British withdrawal would undermine the UN position. Despite pressure from the Conservative opposition, Blair appears to have been content to let his cabinet colleagues run with Palliser, and his Principal Private Secretary apparently briefed ministerial meetings that the Prime Minister was content for them to 'go for the radical option'. While the Prime Minister's personal involvement may have been limited, his cabinet ministers were heavily invested in Sierra Leone. Cook had been personally involved in both Lomé and the "arms-to-Africa" affair. Short too had a stake in the outcome, having previously approved the use of DFID funds to supply ammunition to Kabbah's armed forces.[62] Equally, she had a deep personal commitment to development, and was receptive to the idea that poverty relief and humanitarian goals were dependent on improvements in security.[63]

Discussion in Whitehall largely centred around differences in opinion between the MOD and the FCO. Both departments supported the concept of military deployment. However, the Foreign Secretary felt that the British interest lay primarily in shoring up the Lomé agreement and the UN mission – in effect

[59] Dorman, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
[60] Richards, *Taking Command*, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
[61] *Ibid.*, p. 160.
[62] Kampfner, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-1.
[63] Clare Short, 'A Humanitarian Surge and its Demise, 1997 to 2003: A Personal Account', *Peacebuilding*, 1:1 (2013), pp. 33-7.

rescuing the Kabbah government – followed by the evacuation of British citizens. In contrast, the Defence Secretary was more concerned with the evacuation of British citizens and the extrication of British officers who had been taken hostage by the RUF while serving as part of the UNAMSIL force.[64] Consequently, Dorman characterises the situation in London during the initial deployment as one of 'differences of view and government indecision'.[65] In so much as Richards drove the government policy from the ground up, therefore, it was by pursuing one set of governmental priorities over another.

Although intervention may not have been the preferred political option for the British Government, Britain could still in theory have declined to intervene at all. Still, once permission was given to deploy British troops, the operation took on a logic of its own. Operation Palliser, for example, provided an opportunity for elements of the British armed forces to further their various institutional interests. Although studies the previous year concluded that British forces were too overstretched to take on the RUF alongside commitments in Kosovo and East Timor, by 2000 this caution had been replaced by a desire amongst certain units to prove their worth and stave off potential defence cuts.[66] Colonel Thomas, who served as Brigadier Richards' Chief of Staff during the initial phase of Palliser, recalled a degree of British military "freebooting" during the operation, and attempted to limit the number of units seeking to deploy for institutional reasons unrelated to the requirements in theatre.[67] Operation Palliser certainly provided the military with an opportunity to run-out the still largely untested Joint Rapid Reaction Force concept; the benefits of which were much touted by Brigadier Richards in defence articles following Palliser.[68] Kampfner has suggested that this dynamic also held currency at the political level, in as much as the Clinton administration's praise for Operation Palliser apparently became a source of personal pride for Blair.[69]

While the pace and nature of British military intervention was undoubtedly driven by events on the ground and the initiative of Brigadier

[64] Dorman, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
[65] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[66] *Ibid.*, pp. 64-7.
[67] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit*.
[68] Richards, 'Expeditionary Operations', *op. cit*., pp. 134-6; Richards, 'Operation Palliser', *op. cit*., pp. 10-5.
[69] Kampfner, *op. cit*., p. 72.

Richards, it would be wrong to say that Palliser lacked strategic direction. The British Government did have clear strategic imperatives for intervention in Sierra Leone beyond the protection of British citizens. However, prolonged debate in Whitehall about which imperatives to prioritise undoubtedly gave Richards the scope to interpret government intent according to the realities of the situation he found on the ground. Richards' initiative was accepted not because it drove strategic imperatives, so much as because it aptly reflected them. That said, strategic imperatives are not the same as persistent and enduring national interests. The fact that intervention was undoubtedly the least preferred option for the British Government highlights the absence of genuine British national interests in Sierra Leone. Yet, because Palliser was largely driven from the ground up, the impact of this absence of profound British interests on British-Sierra Leonean relations during the intervention only really became apparent during IMATT's post-war defence reforms.

Operation Palliser's Legacy on British-Sierra Leonean Relations

With Freetown saved, Operation Palliser subsequently handed over to Operation Basilica. This embedded loan service officers in the RLSMF and deployed a series of Short-Term Training Teams (STTTs) to re-train the SLA, with the aim of destroying the RUF.[70] In September 2000, a patrol of British soldiers from the Royal Irish Regiment was abducted by a former 'Unholy Alliance' militia group called the West Side Boys. The incident prompted a British military hostage rescue called Operation Barras, and highlighted the volatile political situation persisting across the country.[71] Ucko has argued that the precipitous withdrawal of British forces after Operation Palliser, which exposed the remaining training teams to significant risk, was driven by political imperatives in London rather than the military situation on the ground. Thus, it was symptomatic of the initially limited British commitment to intervention in Sierra Leone. Indeed, to a certain extent, the incident surrounding Operation Barras reflected this precipitous early withdrawal, and serves to refocus

[70] Richards, 'Operation Palliser', *op. cit*., p. 11; Richards, 'Expeditionary Operations', *op. cit*., p. 136.
[71] Richard Connaughton, 'Operation "Barass"', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 12:2 (2001) pp. 110-19.

attention away from the operational gains made during Palliser and onto the translation of those gains into strategic success during subsequent operations.[72]

After Barras, Brigadier Richards and the JTFHQ were briefly redeployed to convince the rebels of the 'inevitability of their defeat'. In November 2000, the Royal Navy redeployed warships to Sierra Leone in a show of strength, and HQ 3 Mechanised Brigade assumed the title of HQ British Forces Sierra Leone.[73] Efforts to stabilise Sierra Leone continued under the banner of Operation Silkman, which subsumed both the STTT courses conducted under Operation Basilica, and the mentoring of the RSLMF by loan service officers deployed as part of the newly formed IMATT. A reinvigorated UNAMSIL also began deploying troops into the provinces, beginning with a Pakistan Army brigade in the RUF-controlled southern diamond areas.[74] Despite some continued fighting, two cease-fire agreements were reached with the RUF in late 2000 and early 2001, known as Abuja 1 and 2. These enabled the UN Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programme to restart, and with it a Military Reintegration Programme (MRP) to incorporate former RUF and militia combatants into the renamed Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF).[75]

The initial success of British intervention in Sierra Leone undoubtedly granted British advisers a high level of political access and acceptance. To a certain extent, the level of public esteem and professional regard in which the British were held was present even before Operation Palliser. On arrival in Sierra Leone under the SILSEP programme, Colonel Dent recalled the Deputy Defence Minister Hinga Norman expressing a somewhat nostalgic view that only British recolonization would resolve the country's woes.[76] While Kabbah may not have approved of such sentiments, the affinity for British leadership

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[72] David H. Ucko, 'Can Limited Intervention Work? Lessons from Britain's Success Story in Sierra Leone', *Journal of Strategic studies* (2015), pp. 11-12, online first at http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01402390.2015.1110695?needAccess=true, accessed on 05/09/16.
[73] Colonel Mike Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief 2002', IMATT internal briefing document (Shrewsbury, 24 July 2002), p. 25; Imperial War Museum Film Archives BFA 1475 L1, 'British Army in Sierra Leone, November 2000 (Tape 19)', footage of Royal Marines conducting amphibious landing as a show of force.
[74] Interview with Brigadier (retd.) Barry Le Grys MBE, Commander IMATT 2005-6, conducted in London on 24 July 2015. Le Grys also served in UNAMSIL as a planning officer in 2001.
[75] Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief 2002', *op. cit.*, pp. 26-9.
[76] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*

appears to have intensified following Operation Palliser, and formed a common narrative of many British officers' experiences in the country. Colonel Thomas recalled 'the number of times people said to me in the six weeks that I was there…"have you come to take over again?"…I can remember saying at one point to a chap in the street, "you don't really want us to take over again", and he said "oh, it would be so much better…"'.[77] To a significant extent, such sentiments reflected less a genuine desire for the realities of past imperial dominion than the recognition that Sierra Leone required external assistance to become functional. One IMATT officer, for example, felt that the British enjoyed an unusually high degree of co-operation from RSLMF colleagues, because 'they genuinely wanted this to work. And they saw that under quite frankly British hands, with some international members as well, it was going to work… and they were happy to be with us on that.'[78]

The demonstration of British military might during Operation Palliser undoubtedly created a perception of British military capability which IMATT later traded off, and this was arguably bolstered as a result of Operation Barras. The kidnapping of British soldiers by the West Side Boys was publically embarrassing for the UK. However, during Operation Barras the West Side Boys were effectively wiped out as a coherent military entity, somewhat bolstering the UK's reputation.[79] Ucko has argued that Barras itself had a relatively minor operational impact on the course of the war, dismissing any impact on the RUF's will to fight.[80] However, later IMATT staff repeatedly emphasised its reputational benefits for the British during reform of the RSLMF. One British officer felt the psychological effect of Barras on potentially recalcitrant or obstructive elements of the RSLMF was 'palpable…[it] scared the bejabus out of them'.[81] Colonel Stack similarly described the legacy of Barras as 'security capital. It was really, "don't mess with the Brits".'[82] One IMATT officer, who arrived in Sierra Leone the day after Operation Barras, similarly

[77] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit.*
[78] Interview with Participant A14, a retired senior British officer in IMATT in 2002, conducted in Wiltshire on 21 September 2015.
[79] For a description of the operation, see Connaughton, 'Operation "Barass"', *op. cit.*; Keen, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-5.
[80] Ucko, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-6.
[81] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel (retd.) Jeremey Stadward, a senior British officer in IMATT 2001-3, conducted in Wiltshire on 8 September 2015.
[82] Interview with Colonel (retd.) Philip Stack, IMATT officer serving as the RSLAF Deputy Joint Force Commander in 2004, conducted in Bath on 17 August 2015.

recalled being mobbed by local people clamouring for the return of British rule.[83] IMATT appears to have enjoyed this legacy consistently during its period of existence. For example, Colonel Jamie Martin, Commander IMATT from 2011, recalled what he termed 'the IMATT effect, of British military driving around in white Landrovers with the windows down, engaging with the people, and pretty much wherever we went we were welcomed…because it was a reassuring presence'. In Martin's view, this dynamic not only benefitted IMATT's position in Sierra Leone, but also by association, the RSLAF's own public image.[84]

In January 2002, President Kabbah declared the Rebel War over. The RSLAF was subsequently redeployed up-country to reassert GOSL sovereignty in advance of elections planned for May 2002. However, the UK recognised a need to provide a substantial commitment to post-conflict reconstruction beyond the military support provided during the Rebel War. In 2002, the UK signed a Memorandum of Understanding with GOSL, committing the UK to support Sierra Leone for a further ten years.[85] In part, this commitment reflected the "liberal moment" which prompted New Labour to pursue a normative rather than realist foreign policy. Equally though, it reflects a degree of entanglement in Sierra Leonean domestic affairs obligated by the UK's prominent role in ending the Rebel War. Though spearheaded by DFID, the memorandum confirmed Sierra Leone's political commitment to widespread governmental and democratic reform, including reform of the RSLAF.[86] Command of British forces in Sierra Leone was handed over to IMATT, which the British Government agreed would remain in Sierra Leone beyond the three years originally envisaged in earlier SILSEP planning.[87] IMATT's mission was to 'assist with the transformation of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) into a self-sustaining, democratically accountable and affordable force in order that it can meet Sierra Leone's defence missions and tasks and to facilitate the phased disengagement and withdrawal of IMATT'.[88]

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[83] Interview with Participant A15, a British Army officer who served with IMATT in 2000-1, conducted in Salisbury on 1 October 2015.
[84] Interview with Colonel (retd.) Jamie Martin, Commander IMATT 2011-3, conducted in Dorset on 21 July 2015.
[85] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security System Transformation*, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
[86] *Ibid.*, pp. 84-6.
[87] *Ibid.*, p. 47.
[88] IMATT, 'Visit of Comd IMATT(SL)', unpublished IMATT briefing presentation (31 January 2008), slide 4; Peter J. Middlebrook & Sharon M. Miller, 'Sierra Leone Security Sector

Almost immediately, however, the UK commitment to Sierra Leone produced tensions between the RSLAF and IMATT based around divergent expectations of reform. During the initial stages of IMATT's existence, officers found their ability to pursue the British Government's normative agenda in Sierra Leone was tempered by high RSLAF expectations of British aid. A number of British officers recalled how the RSLAF consistently lobbied for western military hardware like artillery and armour, which it had neither the funds and expertise, nor the external threats to justify.[89] Colonel Dent complained that 'you always want to deliver what people want, if you can, and they always wanted so much that it was impossible to deliver'.[90] These tensions were only exacerbated after IMATT produced a ten year plan for the RSLAF's regeneration in 2004, called Plan 2010, which will be examined in detail in Chapter 7. As Brigadier Le Grys later argued, Plan 2010 and the vision of RSLAF reform it expounded really only perpetuated the expectations which had originated in Operation Palliser. In Le Grys' words, there was:

> 'a lot of friction between their expectation and what we were prepared to deliver. A lot of friction. So this was probably embedded in their thoughts when we arrived first off in Freetown. But we didn't help it along the way.'[91]

This was particularly so, given that British officers felt the need to maintain the vision of an RSLAF with a functional air force and naval component, despite its manifestly aspirational nature, in order to try and achieve a degree of RSLAF "buy-in" to more institutional and normative elements of their reforms.[92]

Indeed, IMATT's relationship with the RSLAF was criticised from relatively early in its existence due to a perceived lack of Sierra Leonean ownership of defence reforms. In March 2004, for instance, DFID's evaluation of the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool (ACPP) fund through which SSR in Sierra Leone was funded, noted that 'Local "ownership" of some of the reform programmes being implemented under the ACPP has not been as prominent as might be

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Expenditure Review', Consultancy report prepared for the Department for International Development Sierra Leone Country Office (Lewes, DE, September 2006), p. v; IMATT, 'IMATT SL Review' unpublished IMATT briefing presentation (July 2003); Dent, 'Background Brief', *op. cit.*, p. 33. This mission statement was initially only the fourth element of a longer mission statement, which was evidently consolidated as IMATT matured and its focus settled.

[89] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A21, a British officer in IMATT 2004-5, conducted in Salisbury on 17 November 2015.

[90] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*

[91] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*

[92] Interview with Participant A16, a senior British officer serving in IMATT in 2003-4, conducted in Somerset on 10 October 2015.

expected.'[93] In general, the report observed a tension between British advisers, who felt Sierra Leonean officials lacked capability and motivation, and Sierra Leonean staff, who charged that UK advisers did not understand the local context or trust GOSL to implement projects.[94] IMATT in particular was singled out for criticism by DFID, whose report noted that 'IMATT's role has been described as advisory but in reality has involved taking the lead in many reforms and operational matters.'[95] In part, these criticisms reflect the generational approach to normative reform which IMATT adopted in Plan 2010, which will be examined in Chapter 7. However, given that IMATT had officially transitioned the majority of its personnel out of executive functions and into advisory roles by 2004, this assessment is noteworthy.[96] Interestingly, Mark White, the DFID SILSEP programme manager, felt that British efforts in Sierra Leone generally represented a good example of local ownership, precisely because there was a willingness to accept British advice among Sierra Leonean officials following Operation Palliser. White did concede, however, that 'the UK's initial ambitions for the MOD were far higher than the Sierra Leone Government was capable and confident with', such that programmes had to be revised in order to gain GOSL buy-in.[97]

To an extent, persuading the RSLAF to take IMATT's normative agenda seriously was also complicated by internal dynamics in IMATT, which did not always set the best of examples. In the immediate post-war period the IMATT Chief of Staff, Colonel Stadward, attempted to consolidate all IMATT personnel from its various national contingents into a newly-built IMATT compound called Leicester Square. This was largely an attempt to exercise greater control over off-duty IMATT personnel, particularly in relation to soldiers' frequenting of Freetown prostitutes known colloquially as "nightfighters". At least at Leicester Square, IMATT personnel were banned from bringing back nightfighters, which

[93] Jeremy Ginifer with Kaye Oliver, 'Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools: Sierra Leone', Department for International Development Evaluation Report EV 647 (London, March 2004), p. 4.
[94] *Ibid.*, p. 13.
[95] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[96] Interview with Participant A11, a senior British officer in Sierra Leone in 2004, conducted in London on 24 July 2015; Interview with Brigadier (retd.) David Santa-Olalla DSO MC, Commander IMATT 2005, conducted in London on 29 June 2015.
[97] Interview with Mark White, DFID SILSEP programme manager 2005-6, conducted in London on 17 July 2015.

Stadward considered 'just a bad example'.[98] The impact of such behaviour is evident from Brigadier Freer's speech as Commander IMATT to the RSLAF officer corps in April 2003, in which he stressed the importance of RSLAF officers' agency in changing the culture of the force:

> 'I do not pretend all IMATT personnel are beyond reproach; indeed some have succumbed to the immoral temptations of Sierra Leone, money changing, cheap sex and more. During my time as Commander IMATT anyone who falls short of the personal standards I have set will be sent back to their country.'[99]

Thus, before IMATT was able to exercise compelling leverage over the RSLAF's norms, it had to reign in some of its own soldiers' more excessive behaviour. Equally, informal networks of international advisers occasionally impeded the formal development of RSLAF ownership. For example, British officers serving in UNAMSIL found it more efficient to work through IMATT than the RSLAF. By 2004, however, IMATT officers judged that the bypassing of official RSLAF liaison processes, although convenient, was no longer appropriate; it actively hampered the development of confidence and capability in RSLAF staff. They consequently connived to force the issue, demanding that senior British officers in the UN deal directly with the RSLAF.[100] Yet, criticism over the degree of local agency in IMATT's relationship with the RSLAF also reflected deep-seated tensions between British Government agencies altogether removed from the Sierra Leonean context, which had a profound effect on the development of British activity in country.

Inter-departmental Rivalries and the Development of British Policy in Sierra Leone

Following the end of the Rebel War, the British Government was represented in Sierra Leone by three main departments: the FCO, via the British High Commission; the MOD, which staffed IMATT; and DFID, which co-ordinated much of the wider state reconstruction activity and provided the funding. Formally, the in-country heads of these three departments formed a triumvirate implementing UK policy in Sierra Leone, with the High Commissioner – the UK's

[98] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*
[99] Brigadier Adrian Freer OBE, 'A Command and Leadership Lecture', delivered at the Myohaung Officers' Mess (04 April 2003), pp. 4-5.
[100] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*

official diplomatic representative in Sierra Leone – as 'primes inter pares'.[101] As Brigadier Santa-Olalla, Commander IMATT in 2005, observed, 'without DFID funding I couldn't have done what I thought I needed to do, and without the political, diplomatic support, I couldn't have done what I did, so it was a real three-legged stool that needed to be held together'.[102] The formal façade of mutual dependence belied serious divisions between the three departments, manifested in frequent personality clashes in-country, which had a profound effect on the co-ordination and development of British policy in Sierra Leone.

Tensions between the British military and DFID reflect the differing organisational cultures held by their members. Under Clare Short, DFID had embraced SSR as a necessary means of furthering its humanitarian and developmental agenda, notably expressed in the Millennium Development Goals. Yet it is not clear that all of DFID's in-country staff were fully convinced of the department's new approach. Despite many years of engagement in Sierra Leone, Colonel Jamie Martin, Commander IMATT from 2011, still observed a 'considerable resentment on the part of DFID against the military. Part of that I think was just the inherent DFID dislike of anybody in a uniform.'[103] This antipathy, however, was undoubtedly mutual. Colonel Stadward, for instance, was disparaging of DFID staff in country immediately after the Rebel War: 'They very rarely went out of Freetown. Any tree they could see they'd hug. They weren't really very effective, weren't very effective at all.'[104] Albrecht later noted that this tension 'reflected a conflict of values, cultures and objectives' between the military and DFID;[105] one which was apparent from the very start of British involvement with the Sierra Leonean defence sector. Colonel Dent, for example, recalled perennial disagreement over the nature of Sierra Leonean agency in reforms, with DFID contending that British officers paid insufficient attention to Sierra Leonean concerns, while British officers maintained that there were too many Sierra Leonean vested interests in the status quo to gain universal support for the normative changes required.

[101] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A19, a senior British officer in IMATT 2008-11, conducted by Skype on 20 October 2015.
[102] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*
[103] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[104] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*
[105] Peter Albrecht, 'Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements for the Sierra Leone Security Sector Reform Programme: A Case Study', Saferworld Research Report (London, 2009), p. 10

Fundamentally, this disagreement also reflected military resentment of DFID's involvement in their planning processes, which Dent argued ran counter to the principles of "mission command" on which the British Army operates.[106] Similarly, calls by DFID consultants to establish clear management plans for the MOD were actively resisted by IMATT officers, who viewed them as unnecessary and overly convoluted. Instead, IMATT cited the simplicity of Ghanaian defence planning, at the time considered by IMATT to be a model for the RSLAF, in comparison to the complexity of DFID's envisaged management plan.[107] However, divergent views sometimes emerged even between the military and civilian staff deployed by the UK MOD. In 2003, for example, a professional rift developed between Commander IMATT and the UK civilian adviser to the MOD over whether the RSLAF should produce a Defence White Paper or a Defence Review.[108]

Initially poor relationships between DFID and IMATT were mirrored by equally troubled relations between DFID and the British High Commission. DFID had originally been formed as an independent department from the FCO's Overseas Development Administration in 1997, and the loss of control over development expenditure undoubtedly rankled with the FCO. In Sierra Leone, this was exacerbated by the disparities between the two departments' in-country profile. While formally the UK political lead in Sierra Leone, the High Commission found itself relatively low down the FCO's list of global priorities, whereas Sierra Leone was a high priority for DFID. In-country, this meant that DFID's largess (and therefore local influence) far outstripped the High Commission's, undermining the High Commissioner's position with GOSL which was well aware that DFID represented "the money". This led to conflict between the two departments' in-country staff over who "owned" relationships with GOSL; a rift which Sierra Leonean interlocutors undoubtedly exploited. In Mark White's view, this was exacerbated by the fact that in Whitehall, the two departments' priorities in Sierra Leone pulled in opposite directions; the FCO was seeking to normalise UK-Sierra Leone relationships as early as possible, while DFID continued to administer one of its largest and most significant aid

[106] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*
[107] Public Sector Reform Unit, 'Management and Functional Review of the Ministry of Defence' (2004), p. 3; Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*
[108] Kondeh, *op. cit.*, p. 156; Brigadier Freer's planning assumptions as late as April 2003 included a full defence review in 2003. Freer, 'Command and Leadership Lecture', *op. cit.*, p. 3.

programmes there.[109] IMATT was certainly not unaware of this dynamic either.[110]

The poor relationship between the triumvirate of UK in-country departments significantly accounts for the uncoordinated nature of early British SSR in Sierra Leone. DFID's evaluation of its programme in Sierra Leone noted that an in-country working group comprising representatives of the triumvirate was only formed in 2004.[111] Yet in 2006, a House of Commons International Development Committee report still noted a lack of communication between the MOD and DFID in Sierra Leone.[112] Colonel Martin later judged that initially, 'IMATT was a big beast with a brigadier, and a lot of money, and I think they probably did their own thing…I think in 2000, 2005-6, the MOD did what it wanted and it probably told the FCO and DFID afterwards'.[113] At the same time though, the MOD's large in-country presence via IMATT was mirrored by DFID's relatively small footprint. Until late 2004, DFID's in-country office in Sierra Leone was effectively a secretariat, with all decision-making run from Whitehall. Only subsequently did DFID's decision-making functions devolve to Sierra Leone with the arrival of an in-country DFID director. After this, relationships between the three departments in Sierra Leone somewhat improved, though Mark White stated that there was, nonetheless, 'an element of [DFID] initially playing catch-up'.[114] In truth, disparate activities in Sierra Leone were partially the product of dysfunction in Whitehall, and a disconnect between perceptions in London and Sierra Leone. Desk officers in Whitehall in all three departments also held other responsibilities, limiting their focus on Sierra Leone.[115] Similarly, a DFID report into the development of UK SSR strategy felt that senior officials in the MOD, military and FCO were less than committed to the concept.[116] Practically, at least Brigadier Le Grys felt that his relations with Whitehall were characterised by a degree impatience and misunderstanding:

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[109] Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.*
[110] Interview with Major General (retd.) Adrian Freer OBE, Commander IMATT 2002-3, conducted in London on 29 July 2015.
[111] Ginifer with Oliver, *op. cit.,* p. 23.
[112] House of Commons International Development Committee, 'Conflict and Development: Peacebuilding and Post–conflict Reconstruction', Sixth Report of Session 2005–06, Volume 1 (London, 25 October 2006), p. 33.
[113] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[114] Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.*
[115] Ginifer with Oliver, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
[116] Nicole Ball, 'Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools: The Security Sector Reform Strategy', DFID Evaluation Report EV 647 (Bradford, 2004), p. 29.

‘as always, there were people back here [in London] saying, “Well why isn’t it moving faster?” and people out in theatre saying, “Well you want to come out here and have a look at it and you’d understand why”.’[117]

Nevertheless, successive IMATT commanders were keenly aware of the rift between DFID and the FCO, and variously sought to exploit or heal it. Brigadiers Freer, Porter and Santa-Olalla proved adept at persuading DFID to fund various IMATT programmes for RSLAF reforms, particularly for housing and redundancies, though these were sometimes hard-won.[118] Brigadier Santa-Olalla also noted how tripartite relationships were improved by the increase in DFID in-country staff. There was also a personality-based dynamic to this shift, likely the product of increased mutual understanding as a result experiences during the now-ongoing campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan, which started to trickle down into Sierra Leone via staff-turnover.[119] That said, the relationship between IMATT and DFID was not helped by the 2005 Output to Purpose Review (OPR) of British activity in Sierra Leone, which constituted the only external review mechanism for IMATT activity, and was highly critical of aspects of IMATT’s approach. Although officially a cross-government exercise, in reality the review was driven by DFID.[120] The report undermined relationships both in Sierra Leone and in Whitehall, and appears to have left a legacy of suspicion in IMATT regarding consultant-led reviews. Brigadier Le Grys, for instance, complained that:

> ‘There’d be the odd occasion when the consultants would be hired and they’d come out to Sierra Leone, interview you, basically write what you’ve told them. Put it into their report as their thoughts not yours, and of course, it’ll all come out from the RSLAF: “Oh well we wanted a four star CDS but the Brits wouldn’t allow us, and we’ve only got a two star. It’s not fair, we wanted this. Brits won’t allow us to send a whole brigade to Somalia yet”, you know. And then you start to explain to the consultant why not, but by then the word’s sort of out.’[121]

A Saferworld study by Albrecht into the OPR process argued that while this tension was in part the result of different organisational cultures and approaches to external scrutiny between the MOD and DFID, the implications of

[117] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*
[118] Interview with Major General Adrian Freer, *op. cit.*; Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*: Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*; Aldo Gaeta, ‘Operation Pebu and the Ministry of Defence’, in Albrecht & Jackson (eds.), *Views from the Front Line*, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-70.
[119] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[120] Albrecht, *op. cit.*, p. 10
[121] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*

this criticism on inter-departmental relationships in Sierra Leone may have outweighed their constructive potential.[122] As Varisco observed, though, the occasionally disparate and "ground-up" development of British policies in Sierra Leone nevertheless helped shape UK SSR policy more widely, in part through such consultant-led research and review exercises.[123]

Shortly after DFID's in-country expansion, DFID policy in Sierra Leone shifted away from the more traditional security-focused elements of SSR towards the wider security sector, and in particular the justice system. Sierra Leone Police (SLP) reform under the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project (CCSSP) was terminated in 2005, with some elements of policing support transferred to SILSEP, which was itself terminated in 2008. In its place, DFID launched the Justice Sector Development Programme, under which the SLP had to compete for resources alongside the wider judicial and legal system.[124] This shift presented some problems for advisers working with the SLP. As Keith Biddle, the outgoing British Inspector-General of Police in the SLP argued, the increased focus on the wider judicial system was in of itself positive, but DFID's approach effectively withdrew much-needed support from the SLP.[125] In Mark White's view, there was a subsequent difficulty in ensuring there was 'no blue water' between Official Development Assistance and International Development Act compliant DFID aid and the needs of the Sierra Leonean security sector, and support to the public order and armed elements of the SLP was at the crux of this.[126] Although the MOD and FCO were given advanced warning, these departments nonetheless viewed closure of the SILSEP programme as abrupt.[127]

In-country, DFID's shift away from direct involvement in the hard security elements of SSR appears to have done little to improve relationships between IMATT and DFID. IMATT's own approach to improving democratic civil-military relations in the RSLAF was in part reliant on SILSEP, but more significantly on the doctrine of 'police primacy', under which the RSLAF relinquished control of

[122] Albrecht, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[123] Varisco, *op. cit.*
[124] House of Commons International Development Committee, *op. cit.*, p. 10; Albrecht, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
[125] Interview with Keith Biddle, *op. cit.*
[126] Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.*
[127] Albrecht, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

domestic security to the SLP and instead focused on external threats. Police primacy was substantially reliant on the SLP maintaining sufficient capabilities such that the RSLAF did not perceive a need to interfere in domestic security; a prospect complicated by the withdrawal of direct DFID support for the SLP under the CCSSP.[128] This concern was only exacerbated by perceptions among some senior IMATT officers that instead of funding security reforms, DFID was 'pouring money into hospitals that weren't functioning and were never going to function, frankly, scandalously wasting taxpayers' money'.[129] Pressure on the SLP was certainly not helped by the simultaneous withdrawal of UNAMSIL in 2005, which, although steadily drawing down since the end of the Rebel War, had nonetheless shouldered a significant burden of internal security duties in the immediate post-war period.[130] More broadly, this shift in DFID policy also impacted on Sierra Leonean public perceptions of British commitment to Sierra Leone beyond the security sector, as DFID investment began to focus on the private sector, rendering UK expenditure (other than on IMATT) less obvious.[131]

Despite unease in IMATT at the direction of DFID policy, by 2004-5 IMATT was itself starting to come under pressure. Whereas DFID had increased its in-country presence, the MOD began to seek clarity over how IMATT would disengage and withdraw from Sierra Leone in the coming years. IMATT was never intended to be a permanent mission, and IMATT's 2004 plan for RSLAF reform, Plan 2010, was itself a recognition that IMATT needed to set credible conditions for its own withdrawal. As one senior officer serving with IMATT in 2004 commented, Plan 2010 was an attempt to 'set an end date as well as end state, and try and bring the two things together for the UK…and set us on a glide path – on both organisations, glide path – to allow a happy separation.'[132] Here, the size and shape of IMATT was significantly dictated by changing priorities in Whitehall; namely, a refocusing of British Government attention in sub-Saharan Africa away from West Africa towards East Africa and the Horn, alongside the MOD's growing preoccupations with two simultaneously

[128] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*; Interview with Keith Biddle, *op. cit.*
[129] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[130] Interview with Keith Biddle, *op. cit.*
[131] House of Commons International Development Committee, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
[132] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*

challenging campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan.[133] Although these pressures were not acute in Sierra Leone in 2004, budgetary pressures on the ACPP allocation to Sierra Leone – of which IMATT salaries were a substantial component – were growing.[134] For example, planning for IMATT's successor began as early as 2006,[135] but was somewhat complicated by the fact that GOSL, in the words of one 2006 DFID review, viewed the UK as the 'donor of both "first" and "last" resort for the security sector'. Consequently, GOSL had little incentive to find alternative sources of support for the RSLAF, while GOSL reliance on UK support limited the prospects for British withdrawal.[136]

On the one hand, the relative lack of national interests in British intervention under Operation Palliser had led to a somewhat humanitarian and normative undercurrent to the British relationship with Sierra Leone, which prized normative liberal reform over immediate national objectives. On the other hand, the relative lack of British national interests in Sierra Leone (beyond the reputational) helps account for increasing Whitehall focus on withdrawal relatively early on in the SSR programme; especially after more concrete and pressing objectives were identified in Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia. While in 2004, Colonel Stack was not convinced that the RSLAF fully appreciated IMATT's relative insignificance in UK policy,[137] by 2007 both GOSL and the RSLAF displayed a shrewd awareness of the strategic imperatives behind British policy in Sierra Leone. Successful presidential elections in 2007 were viewed by the British as a key benchmark of reform, which in reputational terms would confirm their efforts to date and enable further British disengagement. As Brigadier Cholerton, Commander IMATT during the 2007 elections, recalled:

> 'In 2007…Whitehall, was so, so keen to prevent failure in Sierra Leone, the Sierra Leoneans got that, and they almost blackmailed us to a situation where "You better give us more support or [it] might go pear-shaped"…But it was almost like we cared more than they did...there was a political imperative for success.'[138]

The largely peaceful transition of power from the incumbent government to their political opposition in the 2007 elections was widely seen as an indicator of the

[133] Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone 1997-2013: Defence, Diplomacy and Development in Action* (London, Routledge, 2014), pp. 82-3, p. 123.
[134] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*; Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.*
[135] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
[136] Middlebrook & Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
[137] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[138] Interview with Brigadier (retd.) Iain Cholerton CBE, Commander IMATT 2007, conducted in Herefordshire on 16 July 2015.

democratic progress Sierra Leone had made since the Rebel War. However, the British imperative to ensure success, and thus facilitate withdrawal, was keenly exploited by GOSL. The interplay between British strategic motives and conditions on the ground meant that GOSL exercised leverage over IMATT, to the point where it impeded some of IMATT's longer-term objectives for the RSLAF, like independent budgetary sustainability. As Cholerton concluded, 'the Sierra Leoneans knew that we desperately wanted success, and so they perhaps knew they could call on us for resources, perhaps more than we wanted to give, to ensure success.'[139]

The success of 2007 elections did, however, provide a catalyst for a further reduction in IMATT numbers. In 2008, it was decided that IMATT would begin to drawdown, with the end-point roughly timed to coincide with the next electoral cycle in 2012. By the end of 2008, IMATT had reduced to approximately 70 all ranks,[140] and by the end of 2009 IMATT's strength dropped to around 50 personnel. At the same time, Commander IMATT was re-designated as a full colonel rather than a brigadier appointment, and IMATT refocused its activity on supporting RSLAF deployments on Peace Support Operations (PSOs).[141] Yet, this draw-down only exacerbated some of the long-standing tensions between the RSLAF and the UK over conditionality and the continued provision of military support. Colonel Martin, Commander IMATT at the time, found that his relationship with the RSLAF was still characterised by 'a lot of brinkmanship in terms of work and resources'.[142] Nonetheless, the draw-down continued following the 2012 presidential elections, resulting in IMATT's replacement with the International Security Advisory Team (ISAT).

ISAT was created following a Stabilisation Unit review of IMATT in February 2012, and was effectively a hybrid of the previous SILSEP programme and IMATT. It was led by a civil servant rather than a military officer, and its primary role was to provide holistic support to the security sector as a whole rather than simply the RSLAF.[143] In Colonel Martin's view, the Stabilisation Unit study 'was a financially driven review' prompted by the need to free up ACPP

[139] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[140] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-4.
[141] *Ibid.*, pp. 83-4.
[142] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[143] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-5.

funds at a time when 'UK national interest and policy in Africa was switching focus from west to east, principally Somalia and increasingly Kenya'. In order to free up funds the size of IMATT had to be reduced, but by 2012 IMATT had dwindled to such a size that its "teeth to tail" ratio was already dubious. ISAT addressed this by transitioning IMATT's Leicester Square compound to the FCO, removing the military's logistical presence in Sierra Leone.[144] Equally, ISAT reflected a growing shift in UK thinking towards stabilisation in favour of a "light-footprint" approach, which was later codified in the 2013 'Building Stability Overseas Strategy'.[145]

On one level, the creation of ISAT demonstrated the extent to which tripartite departmental tensions had been overcome. This was partly enabled by changing relationships within the British military contingent in Sierra Leone. The reduction in IMATT allowed the Defence Attaché in the High Commission to assume a more prominent role, and this was exploited during the planning for ISAT. This was itself partly facilitated by the appointment of a naval officer to the role, Commander Sam Seward, who had previously served in IMATT. With a smaller IMATT focused on supporting RSLAF Peace Support Operations (PSOs), Seward was the formal UK military representative during much of the in country planning for ISAT, and was able to take a more holistic perspective than previous incumbents who had remained in the shadow of IMATT. Equally though, reduced inter-departmental tensions reflected the reduced importance of Sierra Leone in Whitehall. Seward, for example, was not only the Defence Attaché to Sierra Leone, but simultaneously to Guinea and Liberia, and the UK maritime adviser for maritime security in West Africa.[146]

ISAT's broad focus effectively recognised that other Sierra Leonean state institutions had fared less well than the RSLAF, which itself remained a source of inter-departmental contention. In Colonel Martin's view,

> 'there was also tacit acknowledgement that DFID had got it wrong when it withdrew funding from the mainstream police at the end of 2005, and had moved to focusing

[144] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[145] British Government, 'Building Stability Overseas Strategy' (London, 2011), online at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67475/Building-stability-overseas-strategy.pdf accessed 10/03/14; see also Robert Johnson, 'Upstream Engagement and Downstream Entanglements: The Assumptions, Opportunities, and Threats of Partnering', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 25:3 (2014), pp. 647-668.
[146] Interview with Commander (retd.) Sam Seward, IMATT Maritime Adviser 2000-2002 and UK Defence Attaché to Sierra Leone 2010-13, conducted in Devon on 30 October 2015.

> on sort of, community policing, access to justice. And I think as a result the performance of the SLP had dropped, and I think, I never actually got anyone to admit it, DFID knew they had got that wrong and they were quite defensive about it, whereas they could see the RSLAF had just continued to go up and up, and the police had gone down and down, and I think they felt that didn't reflect'.[147]

Although Albrecht and Jackson have questioned the fairness of this assessment,[148] Seward's support for the ISAT model largely stemmed from a belief that the RSLAF could no longer be the priority, owing to its relative success.[149] The extent to which ISAT truly represented a more co-operative attitude between the MOD and DFID is further debatable, given that Martin at least felt ISAT should have been initially led by a military officer or retired officer.[150] Nonetheless, during the UK surge to counter Ebola in Sierra Leone known as Operation Gritrock, MOD-DFID working relationships in theatre were noticeably improved.[151]

Perhaps more importantly, as IMATT downsized inter-departmental rivalries were somewhat supplanted by concerns that British influence in Sierra Leone was being eroded by other donors. The UK had never been the only external country intervening in Sierra Leone, and in comparison to the UN and ECOMOG, came rather late to the party. Yet, the legacy of IMATT is widely considered to have provided the UK with significant enduring influence in Sierra Leone.[152] Nonetheless, Sierra Leone received aid from a number of European countries and the US, while the US, Canada, Nigeria, and various other African states all contributed personnel to IMATT.[153] In 2005, for instance, the Netherlands offered €2m for vehicle purchases, Switzerland donated 206 trucks, and the US three coastal patrol vessels, with a further one donated by China.[154] These contributions were generally well received by IMATT, who appreciated both the RSLAF and DFID's resourcing limitations,[155] and felt that the international nature of IMATT improved its legitimacy. DFID consultants did raise concerns that the provision of such off-budget aid was potentially

[147] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[148] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, p. 121-2.
[149] Interview with Commander Sam Seward, *op. cit.*
[150] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[151] Interview with Participant A8, a senior British officer who served in Sierra Leone, conducted in Kent on 12 August 2015; Interview with Participant A25, a Stabilisation Unit Deployable Civilian Expert in Sierra Leone 2015-6, conducted in London on 27 April 2016.
[152] Varisco, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-8; Simpson, *op. cit.*
[153] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*
[154] Middlebrook & Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
[155] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*

pernicious to the development of proper financial accountability and planning in the RSLAF.[156] Still, as IMATT downsized, officers became increasingly sensitive to the political influence of the last donor on that list: China.

China had provided limited aid to the Sierra Leonean armed forces since before the Rebel War, and continued to do so throughout the conflict.[157] China holds strategic interests in Sierra Leone related to fishing and mineral resources, which Chinese aid helps to secure; something which has not gone without comment in the local press.[158] One British adviser during the war recalled distributing a substantial shipment of Chinese equipment and arms, including AK56 rifles and combat clothing (much of which ultimately did not fit RSLMF soldiers). But as this officer observed,

> 'you never saw anyone, never saw a Chinese guy ever in the whole place, but their influence was everywhere. Very clever. The Sierra Leone Government, probably sensibly, was taking whatever it could get from wherever it could get.'[159]

Similarly, Keith Biddle was able to obtain new sewing machines for the SLP via Chinese donation, much to the chagrin of the UK.[160] But occasionally, IMATT's efforts at defence reform led it into conflict with Chinese interests. For instance, while serving as IMATT adviser to the Sierra Leonean navy during and after Operation Palliser, a significant proportion of Seward's time was spent attempting to enforce fishing licences on the large Chinese fishing fleets off the coast of Sierra Leone. Seward's attempts at establishing GOSL maritime sovereignty, however, were frustrated by the unwillingness of other GOSL departments to enforce their own laws, having established their own less than transparent business relationships with Chinese fishermen.[161] The subsequent donation of a Chinese patrol boat to the RSLAF, ostensibly to help Sierra Leone enforce its maritime sovereignty, further demonstrated the limits of British

[156] Middlebrook & Miller, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-1.
[157] Eric G. Berman, 'Re-Armament in Sierra Leone: One Year After the Lomé Peace Agreement', Small Arms Survey Occasional Paper No. 1 (Geneva, December 2000), *passim*.
[158] Kafayat Amusa, Nara Monkam & Nicola Viegi, 'How and Why China became Africa's Biggest Aid Donor', *Sierra Leone Telegraph*, 3 May 2016, online at http://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/?p=12585, accessed on 24/07/16.
[159] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*
[160] Interview with Keith Biddle, *op. cit.*
[161] Interview with Commander Sam Seward, *op. cit.*; see also Jon White, 'The Rise and Fall of the Sierra Leone Navy and the UK's Role in its Downfall', Corbett Paper No. 17 (Shrivenham, May 2015).

influence over GOSL, as IMATT was side-lined from the associated negotiations.[162]

As IMATT began to withdraw, it became apparent that the RSLAF could use donations from other states – and particularly China – not only to replace British support, and so to an extent alleviate the need to make the more painful transformations that the British advocated, but also as a lever in its relationship with IMATT. For example, IMATT officers were generally sceptical as the long-term viability of Sierra Leone's maritime wing – contrary to RSLAF ambitions. They also repeatedly raised concerns about the sustainability of Chinese maritime donations, which came without maintenance or logistical support packages and for which local parts were not available.[163] Instead of revising their ambitions, Sierra Leone approached China to repair the donated craft, and again excluded the British from negotiations.[164] To a certain extent, China's policy of non-intervention may have made Chinese aid more appealing than Western aid, which largely came with liberal normative caveats or expectations. Yet, Chinese influence was not automatically detrimental to democratic normative development. For example, during the 2007 election cycle, President Kabbah sought international support for declaring a state of emergency which may have derailed the election process and maintained him in office, but was reputedly rebuffed by China which maintained pressure on Kabbah in line with the rest of the diplomatic community.[165] It is clear though, that Chinese aid somewhat supplanted British influence as the UK withdrew. China always offered places on its staff courses to Sierra Leonean officers, but following IMATT withdrawal, China is the only country which continues to fund overseas courses.[166] Similarly, China provided military medics to Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis.[167]

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[162] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[163] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[164] Interview with Participant A18, a British officer serving with IMATT, 2010-13, conducted in Hampshire on 27 October 2015.
[165] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: A New Era of Reform?', Africa Report No. 143 (Dakar/Brussels, 31 July 2008), p. 3.
[166] Interview with Commander Sam Seward, *op. cit.*; Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, 'Establishment and Development of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), online at http://www.mod.gov.sl/docs/TheHistoryOfRepublicOfSierraLeoneArmedForces-RSLAF.pdf, accessed on 25/05/16, p. 18.
[167] Yinying Lu, G. Rong, S. P. Yu, Z. Su, X. Duan, Z. Dong, H. Xia, N. Zhan, C. Jin, J. Ji & H. Duan, 'Chinese Military Medical Teams in the Ebola Outbreak of Sierra Leone', *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps* (2016), online at

In retrospect, IMATT officers were generally extremely proud of the distance the RSLAF had travelled under their guidance since the Rebel War. Yet, a number of former IMATT commanders expressed doubts over the strategic utility of the British effort in Sierra Leone. Brigadier Cholerton, for example, remarked that 'they always hold up IMATT and Sierra Leone as a classic example of a success story. But it's a success story that I would say has come at a disproportionate cost, in terms of effort.'[168] Similarly, the last Commander IMATT, Colonel Jamie Martin, recalled his scepticism at IMATT's role while in theatre, but also how his opinion has changed subsequently:

> **'**in terms of UK Government policy and priorities, I was quite hard pushed to justify why this little team was sitting in Sierra Leone, you know, what was the strategic significance of Sierra Leone…I personally think that the Ebola outbreak, and from what I can understand the response and the activities of the RSLAF, I think have vindicated to a large extent the expenditure and the effort that IMATT put in in the 12, 13 years of its existence.'[169]

Such concerns were inevitably more prominent as IMATT began to draw down and the RSLAF became less reliant on international advisers for its day-to-day functioning. Yet equally, the relative difficulty in justifying British expenditure on IMATT expressed by a number of senior British officers in IMATT may also help to explain the British irritation at increasing Chinese influence, given that informal British influence in GOSL was perceived to be one of the more tangible and enduring benefits of IMATT's legacy.

Conclusions

British military intervention in Sierra Leone resulted from a convergence of international and domestic strategic pressures. A number of these were effectively reputational, stemming from the UK's prominent involvement in the discredited Lomé Accords and the "arms-to Africa" scandal. As Connaughton argued, reputational factors can become effective substitutes for national interests when pertinent to domestic electorates.[170] As Kampfner has highlighted, there was also an ideological dimension to British intervention, at least in so far as the British Government felt it had a historical obligation to

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http://jramc.bmj.com/content/early/2016/01/07/jramc-2015-000562.full, accessed on 24/07/16; 'China was the First and Biggest Donor in our Ebola Fight – Foreign Minister', *Awoko News*, 09 February 2016, online at http://awoko.org/2016/02/09/sierra-leone-news-china-was-the-first-and-biggest-donor-in-our-ebola-fight-foreign-minister/, accessed on 24/07/16.

[168] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*

[169] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*

[170] Connaughton, 'The Mechanics and Nature of British Interventions', *op. cit.*

Sierra Leone stemming from its colonial past; something mirrored by Tony Blair's personal affinity with the country.[171] Moreover, the ten-year Memorandum of Understanding signed by the UK matched New Labour's "ethical foreign policy" stance. British commitment to SSR in Sierra Leone certainly reflected DFID's developing commitment to a security-development nexus, notwithstanding Dorman's observation that New Labour policy was otherwise primarily domestically-orientated.[172] Nonetheless, international dynamics also played a role; not least the international community's view that after Lomé, Sierra Leone was primarily a British problem (especially in France and the United States).[173] Similarly, as Williams observed, the need to prop-up the ailing reputation of UN peacekeeping represented both a national priority and a normative international commitment.[174]

However, the expansion of British commitments in Sierra Leone was driven from the ground up. Brigadier Richards acted largely unilaterally by initiating a stabilisation campaign alongside the authorised NEO, driving British policy at a pace Whitehall was not immediately comfortable with. In part, Richards' decision simply reflected an astute understanding of the political pressures acting on the New Labour cabinet. While a broad and amorphous British commitment to defending the reputation of UN peacekeeping may have justified British military action, it was primarily Brigadier Richards' initiative on the ground which confirmed this course of action.[175] To a certain extent, however, Richards' initiative was only accepted in Whitehall because it was successful, and it solved an immediate problem which Whitehall had not itself yet reconciled. The idea that British intervention was not driven by strategic or national interests, but instead by a convergence of circumstance can be seen in British policy prior to Palliser. Both the Abuja and Lomé power-sharing agreements demonstrated a British desire not to directly intervene. Similarly, the "arms-to-Africa" scandal, with its use of hired mercenaries and local (rather than metropolitan) planning, equally reflected a lack of official British interest in

[171] Kampfner, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-7.
[172] Dorman, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-28.
[173] *Ibid.*, pp. 64-6.
[174] Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 155.
[175] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit.*; Richards, *Taking Command*, *op. cit.*

developing a wider UK commitment in Sierra Leone.[176] This limited initial commitment to Sierra Leone is mirrored in the British military operation which followed Palliser, Operation Basilica, which constituted a standard British military training team despite the fact that the Rebel War remained in a state of suspended animation. This rapid withdrawal of British military presence led in part to the kidnapping of the Royal Irish and Operation Barras, necessitating an increased British military presence in Sierra Leone.[177] Once again, British involvement was driven by events on the ground, drawing the UK into a more costly commitment.

Operation Palliser and the subsequent British effort during the Rebel War, together with the ten-year memorandum on inter-governmental support, created local expectations which outstripped British will. This was manifested in the level of resourcing the UK was willing to commit to Sierra Leone, complicating normative change in the RSLAF and eventual IMATT withdrawal. While the British desire to foster liberal democratic civil-military norms in the RSLAF was partly underpinned by an absence of core national interests in Sierra Leone, it was also seen as the main mechanism through which the Sierra Leonean security sector would become sustainable, thus enabling British withdrawal.[178] Yet, RSLAF reliance on IMATT reduced the UK's ability to use its support conditionally to compel normative change, concomitantly impeding British withdrawal.[179] Thus, at least in principle, the dynamics of British policy in Sierra Leone appear comparable to Grissom's characterisation of the mismatched strategic interaction between Afghan and ISAF priorities in the ANA, which resulted in dysfunctional defence reforms in Afghanistan.[180]

The pressure on IMATT to downsize became more acute following the increased British commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, and more widely in West Africa as part of the post-9/11 war on terror. These other commitments reduced the UK's relative strategic interest in its commitments in Sierra Leone, while simultaneously creating pressure for UK resources there to be freed up for

[176] Connaughton, 'The Mechanics and Nature of British Intervention', *op. cit.*, p. 84; Gberie & Penfold, *op. cit.*
[177] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit.*
[178] See the IMATT mission statement for example.
[179] Middlebrook & Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
[180] Grissom, *op. cit.*

other theatres.[181] Despite this, IMATT remains one of the longest examples of bi-lateral SSR, and regardless of other priorities, the UK was largely committed until 2012 by its initial memorandum.[182] Here, events on the ground again drove priorities, as the UK strove to ensure its normative and reputational aspirations in Sierra Leone survived the 2007 and 2012 electoral cycles, in a dynamic that might be reasonably described as akin to "sunk costs" theory.[183]

To a significant extent, however, British policy in Sierra Leone was also mediated by the ebb and flow of inter-departmental conflict, which acted both in Whitehall and more profoundly in-country. Poor relationships between the MOD/IMATT and DFID led to a lack of commitment to the concept of SSR among senior officers in Whitehall, and IMATT's programmes being conducted largely in isolation from DFID in theatre. The gulf between the two organisations can be seen in the negative military reactions to DFID oversight reviews, and in IMATT's attitude to changing DFID approaches to SSR – particularly regarding the SLP.[184] The sometimes strained nature of this relationship was periodically matched by conflict between the High Commission and DFID, which reflected a long-standing inter-departmental rivalry and differing departmental perceptions of Sierra Leone as a strategic priority. Conflict between DFID and the FCO in-country largely revolved around which department should lead, with the FCO being de jure in charge, while DFID's funding made it de facto more influential – a schism GOSL attempted to exploit.[185] The importance of these in-country relationships in driving British policy on the ground is demonstrated in DFID's decision to increase its staff in Sierra Leone in late 2004, and devolve policy decision making to its Freetown office.

Nonetheless, it is easy to overstate the significance of these tensions. Relationships in-country undoubtedly improved over time, and British representatives still attempted to present a united front to GOSL despite their

[181] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[182] Interview with Participant A5, a senior British officer who served in Sierra Leone, conducted in Exeter on 14 June 2015; Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[183] Here, I use "sunk costs" in a lay sense, meaning the (somewhat irrational) influence of previous expenditure on future decision-making. For a discussion, see Stefan Roth, Thomas Robbert & Lennart Straus, 'On the Sunk-Cost Effect in Economic Decision-Making: A Meta-Analytic Review', *Business Research*, 8:1 (2015), pp. 99-138.
[184] Albrecht, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[185] Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.*

internal differences. Equally, as Varisco has highlighted, these (frequently reactive) in-country dynamics did much to influence the development of wider UK Government thinking on SSR best practice, later codified by Whitehall.[186] Equally, as the ten-year memorandum drew to an end, future British policy in Sierra Leone was determined both by in-country discussions and by metropolitan imperatives. In this sense, ISAT can be seen as an early manifestation of the UK's shift towards BSOS principles. ISAT itself also reflects the reduction in inter-departmental tensions, being jointly composed of development, military, civil service and police professionals. Yet equally, ISAT also reflected the increasing irrelevance of Sierra Leone in UK foreign policy, which must also have been accompanied by a reduction in inter-departmental tensions there.

The British surge back into Sierra Leone to tackle the West African Ebola pandemic under Operation Gritrock offers an interesting window onto recent British policy towards the country. On the one hand, Gritrock is in continuity with previous British intervention, driven by events on the ground and a sense of UK obligation to Sierra Leone as much as by any metropolitan national interests. Yet at the same time, the need for Gritrock (as well as the performance of the RSLAF during this operation, which will be examined in detail in Chapter 8) has been used as a post-hoc justification for British expenditure under IMATT, compensating for a lack of other tangible UK interests in Sierra Leone.[187] Here, views towards intervention have perhaps come full circle, prioritising humanitarian narratives once again. Yet the presence of Chinese medical teams in Sierra Leone during Gritrock, in line with a wider increase in Chinese influence, exposes tensions between British departmental approaches to intervention that are mirrored in liberal normative defence reform more widely. The UK's stated aim of producing an independent, self-sustaining, and democratically-accountable RSLAF was complicated by unilateral Chinese military aid, which lacked overt normative conditionality. In the context of a general British military suspicion of China, this arguably reintroduced a higher degree of national interest into British agendas in Sierra Leone. In the abstract, it is expected that as the recipients of SSR programmes develop, they will become less reliant on their donors. Yet simultaneously, donors will also

[186] Varisco, *op. cit.*
[187] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A8 *op. cit.*

exercise less influence over recipient's policy. Where these policies then run counter to either the norms espoused by SSR, or contrary to what the donor perceives as its own strategic agendas, this creates a conflict of interest in (or between elements of) the donor state, between pursuing development and retaining influence. In Sierra Leone, the potential for this dynamic is particularly ironic, given that the UK did not perceive any significant British interests in Sierra Leone during much of its engagement there.

This chapter has explored the changing strategic imperatives behind British intervention in Sierra Leone, and the inter-departmental and metropolitan-periphery dynamics which shaped the implementation of British policy. The previous chapter examined Sierra Leonean civil-military relations prior to British military intervention, which shaped the neo-patrimonial culture of the Sierra Leonean military and led to institutional collapse. Taken together, these two chapters chart the social and political motives which shaped military change in Sierra Leone – both the local and the international – and which together formed the landscape that later defence reforms would have to traverse. The next three chapters will now turn to the detail of actually implementing cultural change in the Sierra Leonean military, examining the process through which these local and international agendas intersected, and the ways in which IMATT sought to manage that process to ensure its agendas succeeded. Chapter 6 looks at wartime military adaptation and immediate post-war attempts at consolidation, while Chapter 7 examines IMATT's more programmatic peacetime reforms. Chapter 8 then examines the impact of IMATT withdrawal, and the RSLAF's shifting focus towards peacekeeping.

6. Improvise, Adapt and Fail to Overcome? Stabilisation and Military Capacity Building in Sierra Leone, 2000-3

This chapter will examine the relative impact of wartime adaptation and institutional reform on the Sierra Leonean military, both in terms of its combat effectiveness, and its political character. In Chapter 4, the history of Sierra Leonean civil-military relations prior to British intervention was examined, outlining the prevailing neo-patrimonial culture of the RSLMF. The previous chapter highlighted the lack of hard strategic interests behind British intervention in Sierra Leone, finding that the initial British focus on stabilisation developed into a wider normative agenda from the ground up. This chapter will explore how these two dynamics – the RSLMF's neo-patrimonial collapse, and the British focus first on stabilisation and then on normative civil-military reform – intersected during British military intervention in the Rebel War. Ultimately, the Sierra Leonean armed forces did change as a result of British supervision during the war, but while adaptive in nature, these changes were externally-driven. Yet, the depth of the RSLMF's neo-patrimonial culture precluded more profound institutional reform during the war, and limited the normative impact of British advisers. Consequently, the relatively modest changes seen in the Sierra Leonean military, such as they were, are best described as somewhat ad hoc *externally-led adaptations*.

Interventionists have typically sought to improve the military capacity of local partners through the deployment of advisory missions to educate, train and equip their hosts. As Stoker's edited work highlighted, such missions are frequently deployed in pursuit of the diplomatic, economic or security interests of the intervening state.[1] German military advisers in nineteenth century Chile advocated both Prussian military thought and Krupp munitions, while Stoker found that in their dealings with Poland, interwar French naval advisers privileged the sale of French weapons to the point that they actually undermined the security of their ally.[2] Mehmed Ali's Egypt attempted to bypass these

[1] Donald Stoker, 'The History and Evolution of Foreign Military Advising and Assistance, 1815–2007', in Donald Stoker (ed.), *Military Advising and Assistance: From Mercenaries to Privatization, 1815-2007* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2008), pp. 1-10.
[2] William F. Sater, 'The Impact of Foreign Advisors on Chile's Armed Forces, 1810-2005', in *ibid.*, pp. 26-41; Donald Stoker, 'Buying Influence, Selling Arms, Undermining a Friend: The

dynamics through its preference for more mercenary sources of external advice.[3] Yet the Sultan of Oman's use of contracted British officers to bolster his military during the Dhofar insurgency did not preclude wider British interference in the Omani state.[4] As a contemporary RAND study for the US Department of Defence concluded, the success of these training missions is typically determined by the extent to which external priorities align with local interests, as well as by the scale of the external commitment to local change.[5]

Nonetheless, a number of processes have been identified through which these missions can achieve change. In line with the constructivist turn in international relations, scholars have highlighted the importance of normative exchange. Kier's examination of the interwar French and British armies found that cultural assumptions affect armies' propensity to adopt certain reforms; an argument Farrell expanded in his study of the inter-war Irish army, whose professional proclivities impelled imitation along British lines.[6] A desire to modernise armed forces in line with established international norms can provide the stimulus for national governments to host foreign military missions. This seems particularly likely when foreign military practices have demonstrable utility for a country's own defence policies, as with Japan's use of foreign advisers to import Western military norms during the Meiji period.[7] Military training missions have also been used to export norms at the insistence of interventionists, rather than at the invite of their hosts. Arguably, early US involvement with the armed forces of the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua mainly reflected positivist trends in US domestic policy,[8] while Jowell has

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French Naval Mission to Poland and the Development of the Polish Navy, 1923-1932', in *ibid.*, pp. 42-60.

[3] John P. Dunn, 'Missions or Mercenaries? European Military Advisors in Mehmed Ali's Egypt, 1815-1848', in *ibid.*, pp. 11-25.

[4] Ranulph Fiennes, *Where Soldiers Fear to Tread* (London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1975); John E. Peterson, *Oman's Insurgencies: The Sultanate's Struggle for Supremacy* (London, Saqi, 2007).

[5] Christopher Paul, Colin P. Clarke, Beth Grill, Stephanie Young, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Joe Hogler & Christine Leah, *What Works Best When Building Partner Capacity and Under What Circumstances?* (Santa Monica, CA, RAND, 2013).

[6] Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1997); Theo Farrell, 'World Culture and the Irish Army, 1922-1942', in Theo Farrell & Terry Terriff, *The Sources of Military Change: Culture, Politics, Technology* (Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp. 69-90.

[7] Emily O. Goldman, 'The Spread of Western Models to Ottoman Turkey and Meiji Japan', in Theo Farrell & Terry Terriff, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-68.

[8] Eric R. Rittinger, 'Exporting Professionalism: US Efforts to Reform the Armed Forces in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, 1916-1933', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 26:1 (2015), pp. 136-157.

demonstrated how externally-led processes of military integration and normative socialisation can reshape local armed forces following civil war.[9] Lieutenant Colonel Simpson, a British officer who served with IMATT following the Rebel War, described this process in Sierra Leone as 'moral suasion', through which the Sierra Leonean military was educated, persuaded, and cajoled into pursuing the UK's normative agenda.[10] Rosén has argued that this advisory process during international intervention in Afghanistan represented a new paradigm of international relations, in which the mentor became a conduit for neo-liberal state-building practices aimed at exporting Western organisational cultures.[11]

However, recent scholarship has increasingly distanced peacetime reform from wartime change. Older literature on peacetime preparation for war tended to focus on top-down institutional mechanisms of change,[12] or else on features of the external environment that shape military actions, such as the structure of civil-military relations or deliberate interventions by political elites.[13] Recent studies have differentiated these processes from wartime change, which is described as adaptation rather than reform. Farrell found that ground-up adaptation intended to overcome enemy strengths on the battlefield accounted for the development of British counter-insurgency in Helmand.[14] Foley similarly identified adaptive traits in the Imperial German military's tactical evolution during the First World War.[15] Consequently, the promulgation of adaptive advantages throughout the military institution through horizontal and vertical

[9] Marco Jowell, 'Cohesion Through Socialization: Liberation, Tradition and Modernity in the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF)', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 8:2 (2014), pp. 278-93.
[10] Lieutenant Colonel Harold Simpson MBE, 'UK Sponsored Stabilisation and Reform in Sierra Leone 2002-2013: A Unique Case or a Template for Future Intervention(s)?', Sandhurst Occasional Papers No. 19 (Camberley, 2014).
[11] Frederik Ferdinand Rosén, 'No Words will Deliver Anything: Coaching and Mentoring as Neoliberal Governance Strategy in the Afghan State Administration', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 5:2 (2011), pp. 151-173.
[12] Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1991).
[13] Deborah D. Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1994); Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1984).
[14] Theo Farrell, 'Improving in War: Military Adaptation and the British in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006–2009', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33:4 (2010), pp. 567-594.
[15] Robert T. Foley, 'A Case Study in Horizontal Military Innovation: The German Army, 1916–1918', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 35:6 (2012), pp. 799-827; also, Robert T. Foley, 'Dumb Donkeys or Cunning Foxes? Learning in the British and German Armies During the Great War', *International Affairs*, 90:2 (2014), pp. 279-98.

systems of "lesson learning" has become a source of considerable scholarly interest.[16]

Yet, a number of studies have highlighted the difficulties of institutionalising wartime adaptation – of ensuring adaptation re-orientates institutional culture. Catignani found that despite the development of extensive lessons learnt processes in the British Army, British soldiers' preferences towards the conduct of war changed little.[17] Similarly, Kollars found that many of the improvised structures the US military developed to facilitate wartime adaptation – described as "adhocracies" – proved impossible to accommodate in the military's more rigid peacetime bureaucracy.[18] Harkness and Hunzeker also found that political elites may actively inhibit military innovation for strategic reasons.[19] The difficulties of conducting wartime adaptation have led Grissom to conclude that the very presence of external interventionists may actively serve to impede ground-up adaptation. In his study of ISAF's reform of the ANA, Grissom suggested that the large number of ISAF combat troops in country effectively insulated the ANA from critical levels of enemy threat, reducing imperatives to adapt. While the ANA certainly did change, this was largely in response to top-down external pressure from ISAF, which proved unable to displace the ANA's neo-patrimonial political culture, resulting in ineffective and unenduring results.[20] In short, Grissom concluded that the top-down model of externally-led military reform, typified by peacetime "train and equip" missions, was ill-suited to effecting the wartime innovation needed for battlefield effectiveness.

This chapter will assess the impact of externally-led reform and wartime adaptation on the Sierra Leonean armed forces following Operation Palliser. In

[16] Foley, 'A Case Study in Horizontal Military Innovation', o*p. cit.*; Robert T. Foley, Stuart Griffin & Helen McCartney, '"Transformation in contact": Learning the Lessons of Modern War', *International Affairs*, 87:2 (2011), pp. 253-70; Raphael D. Marcus, 'Military Innovation and Tactical Adaptation in the Israel-Hizballah Conflict: The Institutionalization of Lesson-Learning in the IDF', *Journal of Strategic Studies* (August 2014), p. 502.
[17] Sergio Catignani, '"Getting COIN" at the Tactical Level in Afghanistan: Reassessing Counter-Insurgency Adaptation in the British Army', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 35:4 (2012), pp. 513–539.
[18] Nina Kollars, 'Organising Adaptation in War', *Survival*, 57:6 (2015), pp. 111-126
[19] Kristen A. Harkness & Michael Hunzeker, 'Military Maladaptation: Counterinsurgency and the Politics of Failure', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 38:6 (2015), pp. 777-800.
[20] Adam Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars: NATO Advisors and Military Adaptation in the Afghan National Army, 2001-2011', in Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga & James A. Russell (eds.), *Military Adaptation in Afghanistan* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 263-87.

2000, the British military intervened in the Rebel War, providing significant support to the RSLMF during the course of the conflict. Just as in the later Afghanistan campaign, the British deployed military trainers and advisers alongside combat forces. In Sierra Leone, however, international intervention proved sufficient to defeat the RUF and stabilise the country. Nonetheless, the extent to which the British managed to implement genuine change in the Sierra Leonean military is questionable. First, the extent of Sierra Leonean military change during the war is examined. This chapter then explores the ways in which the British sought to develop Sierra Leonean military capacity, in the second section, and normative civil-military behaviour, in the third section, looking in detail at the political interactions which defined outcomes. In the fourth section, immediate post-war attempts to consolidate IMATT's wartime activities are examined, establishing the state of the RSLAF at war's end. Finally, some conclusions are offered on the implications of external intervention on wartime military adaptation and change.

Train and Equip: Intervention and Change in the Wartime SLAF

British military support to the RSLMF, which was retitled the Sierra Leone Armed Forces (SLAF) during the war, was aimed at improving GOSL's military capacity sufficiently to stabilise the country. The British provided simultaneous support to the SLAF at both the tactical and operational levels. During Operation Palliser, the British created a loose association of nominally pro-government armed groups to fight the RUF, known as the 'Unholy Alliance'. The SLA formed the coalition's core, despite being heavily divided between pro-Kabbah and pro-AFRC factions. AFRC splinter groups like the West Side Boys were also included, as was the CDF and the SLP;[21] the Operational Support Division (the successor to Stevens' SSD) having served as infantry throughout the Rebel War.[22] At the operational level, the British attempted to co-ordinate militia and military activity, while British mentors provided direct support to SLAF

[21] Interview with Major General (retd.) Jerry Thomas CB DSO, JTFHQ and Colonel, General Staff of the SLAF during Operation Palliser, conducted in Exeter on 13 January 15.
[22] Interview with Keith Biddle, Inspector General of Police of the Sierra Leone Police 1999-2004, and retired British Assistant Inspector of Constabulary, conducted in Cheshire on 9 July 2015; Interview with Adrian Horn, British mentor to the Sierra Leone Police, conducted in Norfolk on 5 December 2007 by Daniel Scher as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 9, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/adrian-horn, accessed 22/04/16.

units at the tactical level. This was initially conducted by British Special Forces, but was later continued by IMATT officers on loan service.[23]

Despite the RUF's eventual military defeat, the extent to which this support enabled adaptation and development in the SLAF is debateable. In fact, the success of operations against the RUF was substantially the product of international troops, air power and psychological operations. For example, the Sierra Leonean Air Force's Mi-24 "Hind" helicopter gunships, which provided close air support, were operated by foreign mercenaries.[24] At least publically, Brigadier Richards considered that the real turning point during Palliser came following a small engagement between British Pathfinders and the RUF at Lungi Lol. Despite being only a minor unit action, Richards felt the 'victory sent a powerful message to the RUF…from then on they did not want to fight us'.[25] Even where SLAF units were directly involved in the fighting, their performance was often unreliable. One typical operation carried out over the night of 13/14 June 2000 is illustrative. Here, the RUF attempted to destroy an SLA battalion stationed in Lunsar, by using a vehicle mounted with an anti-aircraft gun to force the SLA into a pre-prepared ambush infiltrated into their rear. The RUF vehicle was located and destroyed by GOSL's mercenary-operated Mi-24. However, the sound of the attack only served to demoralise the SLA battalion, which attempted to retreat, but was trapped by the RUF. The rebel advance was only halted after an SLA radio operator, acting on British instructions, imitated the destroyed RUF vehicle and was able to identify the RUF commander's location. The British promptly revealed their ruse by threatening the rebel commander with an air strike, after which the RUF attack faltered.[26]

This appears to have been typical of SLA performance. During Palliser, Colonel Dent arrived in the MOD one morning to find 'one of the COs standing

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[23] Interview with Colonel (retd.) Mike Dent CBE, SILSEP and IMATT Adviser to the Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence 1999-2002, conducted in Worcester on 20 November 2015; General David Richards, *Taking Command* (London, Headline, 2014), p. 137.

[24] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, o*p. cit.*; Personal correspondence with General Thomas received 05 April 2016.

[25] Richards, *op. cit.*, p. 157; Imperial War Museum Film Archives BFA 1390 L1, 'Operation Palliser, Sierra Leone, May 2000 (Tape 25)', Press briefing by Captain Cameron Jack (Adjutant, 1st Battalion the Parachute Regiment) after an engagement with the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the Pathfinder Platoon of the Parachute Regiment; Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, o*p. cit.*

[26] Gwyn Prins, *The Heart of War: On Power, Conflict and Obligation in the Twenty-First Century* (London, Routledge, 2002), pp. 205-206.

with his armed escort party with his tin hat on' outside the CDS's office, having left his battalion at the front on the basis that conditions were too dangerous.[27] Similarly, Colonel Thomas, who was seconded to run the SLAF headquarters, was forced to recall one SLA battalion commander to Freetown in an attempt to personally cajole him into carrying out orders to attack an RUF position.[28] British officers also held reservations about the political loyalties of some of their Sierra Leonean colleagues, and sometimes did not inform SLAF personnel of operational planning details, 'because we knew the message would get out and it would become inefficient'.[29] One British adviser who served with an SLA battalion shortly after Palliser similarly commented that in the SLA, as an officer 'you just roughly did your bit and everyone was quite chuffed if you turned up and did some soldiering every now and again. That was it, because it's a survivalist culture.'[30] Colonel Thomas concluded that the prevailing mentality in the SLA 'was not martial in any way, it was hunker down and hope nothing bad happens to you.'[31]

In fact, British troops assumed effective control of Sierra Leonean command functions from the outset.[32] Although loan service officers theoretically sat under the Sierra Leonean chain of command, and some even wore SLAF uniform, in reality they took their orders exclusively from a parallel British hierarchy. In the words of one officer serving in a "forward liaison team" mentoring SLA infantry battalions, 'we were basically running the show making sure it [the war] happened'.[33] During Operation Palliser, forward support to SLAF units was initially limited by Whitehall restrictions, which prevented British soldiers from accompanying the SLA on operations any distance from Freetown.[34] As the war continued, however, loan service officers regularly accompanied SLA battalions into the front line.[35] British mentors were also

[27] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*; Colonel Mike Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', IMATT internal briefing document (Shrewsbury, 24 July 2002), p. 23.
[28] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit.*
[29] Interview with Commander (retd.) Sam Seward, IMATT Maritime Adviser 2000-2002 and UK Defence Attaché to Sierra Leone 2010-13, conducted in Devon on 30 October 2015.
[30] Interview with Participant A15, a British Army officer who served with IMATT in 2000-1, conducted in Salisbury on 1 October 2015.
[31] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit.*
[32] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*; Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit.*
[33] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*
[34] Andrew M. Dorman, *Blair's Successful War: British Military Intervention in Sierra Leone* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2009); Richards, o*p. cit.*, p. 148.
[35] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit.*

embedded with the Sierra Leone Navy. The government's flotilla consisted of an ageing Chinese patrol boat, the *Alimamy Rassin*, and three wooden-hulled "whalers" of local construction. Sea-worthy vessels were revamped using cannibalised parts from scrapped army trucks, and subsequently supported SLA operations along major waterways and established cordons at the mouth of rivers to interdict arms smugglers.[36] Yet British advisers serving with SLA battalions during Operations Basilica and Silkman, which followed the initial Palliser intervention, continued to view the SLAF's tactical capabilities as rudimentary. A typical battalion attack would be spearheaded by a Bedford truck onto which a 14.5mm anti-aircraft machine-gun had been mounted using a wooden frame. This would be used to fire directly at RUF ground positions over the top of the drivers cab. The SLA battalion would line up in file behind the vehicle and advance along a track until it made contact with the RUF, where-upon the anti-aircraft gun would open fire and the troops behind would make an attempt to fan out and provide supporting small arms fire.[37] British observers noted that soldiers were typically fortified with "Dutch Courage" before operations, and were prone to rout during unexpected shocks, as in one meeting engagement with the RUF near Masiaka.[38]

Recently, Ucko has challenged the significance of Operation Palliser in the eventual success of the Rebel War. He has argued that the events which led to Operation Barras, and the subsequent British military surge back into theatre, demonstrate the relative importance of stabilisation under Basilica and Silkman to eventual military victory.[39] Certainly, the re-training of the SLAF formed and important element of the stabilisation campaign. Shortly after the initial intervention, the UK agreed a financial commitment of £21.27 million to train and equip the SLA, and conducted a personnel verification process to define the SLA's working establishment as a precursor to a more formalised process of re-training. Under Operation Basilica, training was conducted by a series of Short-Term Training Teams (STTTs), each training a battalion of 1,000

[36] Interview with Commander Sam Seward, *op. cit.*; Jon White, 'The Rise and Fall of the Sierra Leone Navy and the UK's Role in its Downfall', Corbett Paper No. 17 (Shrivenham, May 2015), pp. 12-3.
[37] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*
[38] Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit*., p. 23; Interview with Participant A15, o*p. cit.*
[39] David H. Ucko, 'Can Limited Intervention Work? Lessons from Britain's Success Story in Sierra Leone', *Journal of Strategic studies* (2015), pp. 1-31, online first at http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01402390.2015.1110695?needAccess=true, accessed on 05/09/16.

soldiers over six weeks.[40] These were largely recruited from RSLMF 'service continued' personnel who volunteered to re-join the SLA from the abortive Lomé DDR programme. STTT1, provided by 2nd Battalion, the Royal Anglian Regiment, arrived in Sierra Leone just before Operation Palliser finished.[41] Training was carried out in a large tented camp outside Waterloo called Benguema, and was subsequently subsumed under the title of Operation Silkman, which was tasked with stabilising Sierra Leone after Operation Barras. By December 2000, 3,000 Sierra Leonean soldiers had been retrained, and the UK further agreed to procure uniforms and equipment for the SLA.[42] In early 2001, re-trained SLA battalions were being used to relieve units fighting up-county, enabling those units to be re-constituted and trained in turn. By the time the final STTT departed in early October 2001, a total of 9,300 SLA soldiers and 315 other former combatants had passed out of the now renamed Armed Forces Training Centre (AFTC) Benguema, under the tutelage of nine successive STTTs.[43] By early 2001, however, the limited tactical capacity displayed by retrained units led international observers to describe the UK's approach as 'high-risk', despite the efforts made to train and equip the SLA. Instead, one report demanded that 'British officers must be [formally] placed in the chain of command, probably as deep as the rank of major'.[44]

Although the British were primarily concerned with improving the SLAF's fighting abilities during the Rebel War, much of the British activity also hoped to improve the civil-military behaviours of the military. The SLAF, in common with all armed groups during the war, had developed a reputation for indiscipline, brutality and human rights abuses, contributing to its widespread de-legitimisation among Sierra Leone's civilian population.[45] During the AFRC

[40] Almost immediately, local journalists and international NGOs raised concerns that the courses were too short to effect fundamental changes. See Imperial War Museum Film Archives BFA 1417 'Operation Basilica, Sierra Leone, July 2000 (Tape 8)', Visit to the frigate HMS Argyll (second press conference); International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: Time for a New Military and Political Strategy', Africa Report No. 28 (Freetown/London/Brussels, 11 April 2001), Appendix A.
[41] Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[42] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: Time for a New Military and Political Strategy', *op. cit.*; Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', o*p. cit.*, p. 25.
[43] Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, p. 31.
[44] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: Time for a New Military and Political Strategy', *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[45] For example, Colonel Stack described how the military was 'feared, resented, had lost public respect. It was a damaged institution, because it was seen to have been the institution that had brought the country to the edge of ruin', reflecting the depth of public antipathy he observed for

interregnum, for example, sobels had committed widespread atrocity against both the civilian population and the SLPP government's tribal militias, the CDF. A witness before the Special Court for Sierra Leone later recalled one illustrative instance in which AFRC soldiers repeatedly drove over the mangled body of a CDF member with an army ambulance, while a sergeant looked on and fired into the air in celebration.[46] British officers serving alongside the SLAF following Operation Palliser found that these attitudes persisted in the force. For example, one British mentor later recalled how difficult it was to prevent SLA soldiers murdering captured RUF prisoners.[47] Colonel Thomas concluded simply that 'there isn't a tradition of prisoners of war in Africa'.[48]

British attempts to address this behaviour extended beyond the constraining normative presence of British officers embedded in SLA battalions. The second Abuja cease-fire with the RUF enabled the UN to re-start its Military Reintegration Programme (MRP) in May 2001, with significant British support.[49] The revamped MRP was seen as important for rehabilitating British credibility, but equally represented a profound attempt to reshape the political and civil-military character of the military. Candidates from the RUF and CDF volunteered to join the MRP via the UN-run DDR programme, and were initially processed at a temporary holding centre at Kabata Juction. Here, candidates were screened for suitability to join the SLAF, and successful candidates progressed to further selection and holding camps at Lungi and Mape. These facilities became operational in early June 2001,[50] and around 3,000 former combatants had registered for the programme by May 2002. Ultimately, 2,349 soldiers entered the SLAF via the MRP; 65 per cent of them former RUF

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the post-war army. Interview with Colonel (retd.) Philip Stack, IMATT officer serving as the RSLAF Deputy Joint Force Commander in 2004, conducted in Bath on 17 August 2015.

[46] Danny Hoffman, *The War Machines: Young Men and Violence in Sierra Leone and Liberia* (Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 2011), p. 3.

[47] Interview with Participant A15, o*p. cit.*

[48] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, o*p. cit.*

[49] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone After Elections: Politics as Usual?', Africa Report No. 49 (Freetown/Brussels, 12 July 2002), p. 9; Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', o*p. cit.*, p. 28.

[50] Initially recruits were only screened at Kabata Junction and then formally assessed at Lungi, but from October 2001 all assessment took place at Kabata Junction to reduce the manpower burden on IMATT. The camp at Lungi was then used to accommodate entrants prior to military training, and provided a degree of citizenship education and vocational training. Interview with Lieutenant Colonel (retd.) Jeremey Stadward, a senior British officer in IMATT 2001-3, conducted in Wiltshire on 8 September 2015; Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, pp. 27-8; Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007* (Birmingham, GFN-SSR, 2009), p. 65.

fighters. Although the number of former combatants who entered the MRP was relatively modest in comparison to the 72,000 former combatants who registered as part of the DDR process, it nonetheless represented a significant demographic change for the SLAF, which was at the time only around 12,500 strong. Former militia and rebel fighters came to constitute somewhat over 15 per cent of the new establishment.[51]

The MRP itself was planned and run by IMATT officers. Although UNAMSIL sent a panel of officers to formally accept combatants into the MRP, Major Stadward, the IMATT selection officer in the MRP selection camp at Kabata Junction, stated bluntly that, 'I would be very, very, very surprised if they went against my recommendations'.[52] In no small part, British involvement appears to have been necessary in order to convince President Kabbah that a military re-integration programme was feasible.[53] During the MRP process, entrants received classes on literacy, Sierra Leonean history, and training in human rights and the laws of war.[54] At nine weeks, the military training received by entrants on the MRP was 50 per cent longer than STTT courses run for SLA soldiers; a fact which likely reflects both an increased concern for political reliability of those undergoing the training, and their reduced level of military skill at the outset. The first training course for successful soldier entrants began in October 2001, and saw 889 former combatants trained by a mixture of British and SLAF instructors AFTC Benguema. Subsequent MRP2 and 3 courses trained 535 and 610 former combatants respectively. Ultimately, 56 new officers were commissioned from MRP entrants, and some 290 former combatants were also appointed as non-commissioned officers.[55]

In January 2002, President Kabbah inaugurated a new MOD building in Freetown's former Paramount Hotel, marking the effective end of hostilities. At

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[51] Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, p. 28; International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone After Elections', o*p. cit.*, p. 9.
[52] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*; Albrecht & Jackson, *Security System Transformation, op. cit.*, pp. 65-7; Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*; Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, p. 27.
[53] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*; Interview with Mark White, DFID SILSEP programme manager 2005-6, conducted in London on 17 July 2015.
[54] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*; ICRC Newsletter, Sierra Leone, September 01-February 02, online at https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/newsletter-sl-2002-1.pdf, accessed on 31/07/16.
[55] Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, p. 28, p. 32; Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*; International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone After Elections', o*p. cit.*, p. 9.

the reopening ceremony, Kabbah officially renamed the military the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF). Although SLAF institutional redevelopment had taken a back seat to operational necessities during the Rebel War, British military support also rejuvenated various elements of the military's institutional fabric. In addition to rebuilding the MOD, the British helped redraft SLAF policy during the latter stages of the Rebel War. In early 2000, for example, the British oversaw an increase in the military's pay scales to bring it in line with other public servants, and subsequently restructured officers' pay bands to ensure they fairly reflected rank responsibilities.[56] An honours system was also reintroduced, which the British hoped would provide a way of recognising deserving soldiers without the award of unsuitable promotions, as had been previous practice.[57] Yet, many of the benefits of these reforms were partially subverted by the existing neo-patrimonial preferences of SLAF officers. According to one British mentor, one of the first citations for an award was submitted by a SLAF officer seeking to have himself decorated. A significant cash award made to one SLA battalion by President Kabbah in recognition of a valorous action was appropriated by the unit's officers on a sliding scale according to rank, while the soldiers were instead given a small amount of alcohol and some cigarettes.[58] Nonetheless, in a statement of GOSL commitment to democratic civil-military relations, it was announced that the new MOD would be staffed jointly by both military and civilian personnel.[59]

In early 2002, GOSL reasserted national sovereignty ahead of upcoming general elections by moving SLAF units up-country. With continued fighting in Liberia raising the threat of incursions, and significant numbers of displaced Sierra Leonean refugees across the border, establishing a military presence along the Liberian frontier was judged necessary to prevent instability seeping back into Sierra Leone during the election cycle. These tensions were matched by a long-standing border dispute with Guinea over the Yenga area.[60] The 2002 redeployment represented a significant change in the RSLAF's centre of gravity.

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[56] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security System Transformation, op. cit.*, p. 59; Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*

[57] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*

[58] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*

[59] Government of Sierra Leone, 'Defence White Paper: Informing the People' (Freetown, 2003), para 3008.

[60] Interview with Participant A14, a retired senior British officer in IMATT in 2002, conducted in Wiltshire on 21 September 2015; International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: The State of Security and Governance', Africa Report No. 67 (Freetown/Brussels, 2 September 2003), p. 4.

By this stage the RSLAF consisting of three deployable infantry brigades, and was ultimately dispersed into platoon and company sized border checkpoints.[61] RSLAF units advanced across the country to take up stations along the frontier, ostensibly as a guarantee of Sierra Leonean territorial integrity. The naval wing also made efforts to re-assert a government writ throughout the country, establishing forward operating bases along the coast as far south as Sulima on the Liberian border.[62]

Yet, the wholesale retraining of SLA battalions by British STTTs appears to have had only a marginal impact on SLAF capabilities. The 2002 redeployment highlighted the RSLAF's continued shortcomings. As one IMATT officer stated, 'The operations of war that we were able to conduct were fairly basic. They didn't need to be elaborate. We were essentially conducting un-opposed advances to contact out towards the border'.[63] Practically, this was enabled by arrangements made with the UN and CDF. Under the supervision of the UN, the CDF vacated territory as the RSLAF passed through, establishing movement corridors through which RSLAF could advance unhindered.[64] Consequently, the redeployment was more a series of coordinated moves than tactical operations. RSLAF units were technically led by RSLAF officers, who IMATT considered competent enough to command battalions providing IMATT mentors were on-hand to assist, but IMATT clearly remained the driving force.[65] Brigadier Le Grys, then serving with UNAMSIL, remarked that the RSLAF was 'completely incoherent' above battalion level.[66] Another IMATT officer described RSLAF overall capabilities to be 'rudimentary', and their general level of military skill as 'very low' or 'largely untrained' despite the STTT programme. The RSLAF Joint Force Commander, under whose orders the deployment was conducted, remained a British officer with executive powers, and the position was only transitioned to a Sierra Leonean officer after the elections.[67]

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[61] Interview with Participant A14, *op. cit.*
[62] Interview with Commander Sam Seward, *op. cit.*; White, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[63] Interview with Participant A14, *op. cit.*
[64] Interview with Brigadier (retd.) Barry Le Grys MBE, Commander IMATT 2005-6, conducted in London on 24 July 2015; Interview with Participant A14, *Op. Cit.* This arrangement also prevented any conflict between the SLAF and the CDF, the deliberate separation of the two forces being described by Participant A14 as an outcome described as 'a convenient result of the strategy'.
[65] Interview with Participant A14, *op. cit.*
[66] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*
[67] Interview with Participant A14, *op. cit.*

Perhaps unsurprisingly, neither the presence of British advisers nor the MRP appear to have had any immediate impact on the political behaviour of the force. The redeployment of the newly renamed RSLAF to border security duties in 2002 was not simply a presentational attempt to reassert GOSL sovereignty; it was also a practical reflection of the continued concerns over the military's political proclivities ahead of presidential elections. One senior IMATT officer stated that 'between January and May 2002, there was a short window….[to] fundamentally get the army away from Freetown and out into the countryside, and away from centres of population…so they couldn't be a threat to the population and couldn't influence the outcome of the election.'[68] IMATT ensured that military posts were separated from both the CDF, with which antagonisms persisted, and the civilian population. The same IMATT officer remarked that new dispositions were deliberately chosen so that, for example, the RSLAF brigade commander headquartered in Kenema did not 'start to view Kenema as part of his responsibility'.[69] For their part, large swathes of civil society evidently continued to view the military as a dangerous political actor. In April 2002, for instance, five soldiers were attacked by SLPP supporters in Freetown in separate incidents, primarily because they considered the army to be an agent of the APC.[70]

Although the military did not intervene politically in the 2002 elections, the elections only served to highlight the dangerous political attitudes which remained in the RSLAF. Just a month before the elections, British officers discovered a coup plot involving Johnny Paul Koroma, the ex-army officer who had headed the AFRC coup which overthrew Kabbah.[71] The election itself passed largely peacefully, and was subsequently declared free and fair by international observers. However, in a break from traditional electoral practice, the security forces voted the day before the general population. It is not clear why this procedure occurred. It may have been intended to improve the military's ability to respond to disorder on the election day itself, though it is equally plausible that it was the result of political machinations within the

[68] Interview with Participant A14, *op. cit.*
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone After Elections', *op. cit.*, p. 3, fn. 6.
[71] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

SLPP.[72] The result, however, was that the political inclinations of the armed forces were clearly identifiable from those of the wider population. While President Kabbah's SLPP won the election, the armed forces – in common with the wider security sector – overwhelmingly voted for Kabbah's political opponents in the APC and the Peace and Liberation Party (PLP).[73] The appeal of the PLP among the military was particularly concerning, given that it was headed by Johnny Paul Koroma. Although the PLP only polled around 3 per cent of the vote nationally, winning two parliamentary seats, an estimated 80 per cent of PLP votes came from the security forces.[74] The voting record of the armed forces was subsequently made public, in a move further detrimental to relations between the SLPP and the military. It was speculated that Kabbah himself may have approved this in order to justify continued official support for the CDF. However, Kabbah was also dealing with an internal rift in the SLPP, and so the leak may have come from Kamajor leaders hoping to shore up their own position inside the SLPP vis-à-vis Kabbah.[75]

After the election, Kabbah conducted a tour of the RSLAF to reassure soldiers that his re-election would not prompt purges or reprisals against the military.[76] While this may have diffused fears of a further coup attempt, it had little appreciable impact on wider RSLAF behaviour. In May 2002, for example,

[72] Having the armed forces vote separately was again mooted in the run-up to the 2007 election, ostensibly for this reason, but was disregarded – likely because of the political fall-out which resulted from its occurrence in 2002. Equally, the resulting political fall-out from the military's voting preferences certainly helped to bolster elements of the SLPP in an internal rift in the party between Kabbah's faction and prominent Kamajor politicians. International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone After Elections', *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11; Interview with Brigadier (retd.) Iain Cholerton CBE, Commander IMATT 2007, conducted in Herefordshire on 16 July 2015.
[73] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone After Elections', *op. cit.*, p. 2.
[74] '2002 Presidential Election Results by Candidate and Electoral District', *Sierra Leone Web*, online at http://www.sierra-leone.org/election2002.html, accessed on 22/04/16; International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone After Elections', *op. cit.*, p. 9.
[75] Prior to the elections one leading Kamajor politician was indicted for corruption, and the pro-Kamajor Vice President was not re-selected as Kabbah's running mate in the 2002 election. It was speculated that Kabbah attempted to heal this rift after the elections by stopping the corruption indictment, and maintaining CDF chief Sam Hinga Norman as Deputy Defence Minister (the President, by tradition, was the Defence Minister). International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone After Elections', *op. cit.*, p. 11. Sam Hinga Norman was later indicted for the Kamajor's war crimes by the Special Court for Sierra Leone during Kabbah's tenure, in a move which a number of observers claimed was motivated by internal party-political feuding. While the former SLP IGP Keith Biddle noted that the Special Court's purview clearly included the CDF from the outset, both David Richards and the former British High Commissioner to Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold, publically stated that they believe Hinga Norman's indictment to have been an act of political scapegoating. See Interview with Keith Biddle, o*p. cit.*; Richards, *op. cit.*, p. 122; Lansana Gberie & Peter Penfold, 'An Interview with Peter Penfold', *African Affairs*, 104:414 (2005), pp. 117-125.
[76] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone After Elections', *op. cit.*, p. 10.

the RSLAF introduced a new code of conduct. This aimed to curb the worst excesses of indiscipline and politicisation that had facilitated past coups, and consisted of a series of nine 'dos' and 16 'don'ts' for RSLAF personnel.[77] Despite the extensive guidelines, the code of conduct was still being implemented in 2003.[78] Indeed, on 13 January 2003, a group of former soldiers and civilians attacked the RSLAF armoury in Wellington on the outskirts of Freetown with the intention of overthrowing the government and reinstating Johnny Paul Koroma. A subsequent police investigation found evidence of links between the would-be coupists and serving soldiers. The RSLAF remained so deeply politicised that one international NGO even reported RSLAF concerns that placing newly trained soldiers under the command of existing officers was as good as never having trained them at all.[79]

British Stabilisation and Externally-led Adaptation in the SLAF

Given the significant British military investment in SLAF capabilities during the Rebel War, how can this modest improvement in military capacity be explained? The limited improvement in RSLAF capabilities was partially due to the scant GOSL resources available. In October 2001, for example, one of the two Mi-24s crashed and the remaining airframe was deemed unsafe and grounded owing to a lack of spare parts. Mi-8 "Hip" transport helicopters were still flown in support of RSLAF logistics, but the majority of the 2002 redeployment had to be conducted on foot.[80] Similarly, the RSLAF only had the strength to man 32 of the 150 border crossings in the south east.[81] Yet at the same time, the SLAF's capabilities appear to have differed little from any other rebel or militia group involved in the Rebel War, despite enjoying British support. Like the SLAF, the RUF also made use of "technicals" – vehicles with support weapons rudimentarily mounted on them – while the West Side Boys were able to carry

[77] Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, 'Establishment and Development of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), online at http://www.mod.gov.sl/docs/TheHistoryOfRepublicOfSierraLeoneArmedForces-RSLAF.pdf, accessed on 25/05/16, pp. 13-15.
[78] GOSL, *Defence White Paper*, *op. cit.*, para 1017.
[79] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: The State of Security and Governance', *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.
[80] Julie Hemmings, 'Coroner's Safety Questions for Army', *The Yorkshire Post*, 18 August 2005, online at http://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/coroner-s-safety-questions-for-army-1-2478829, accessed on 22/04/16; Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, p. 26; Interview with Participant A14, o*p. cit.*
[81] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone After Elections', *op. cit.*, p. 10.

out basic fire-and-manoeuvre tactics, establish vehicle check-points, and run a signals section.[82] Grissom contended that in Afghanistan, the presence of international forces effectively served to inhibit the adaptive pressures of war on the ANA, instead mediating change through exclusively top-down processes, which themselves became subject to political and neo-patrimonial subversion.[83] Does this account for the limited military adaptation seen in the SLAF during the later phases of the Rebel War?

The SLAF certainly did not lack bottom-up experience of war, and remained under significant pressure throughout the Rebel War. The period of conflict prior to British intervention did indeed see some adaptation; the expansion of the CDF, initially sponsored by the RSLMF, being the most prominent. But arguably, the RSLMF degraded as much as it innovated, to the point where it differed little from its rebel enemy. It might be argued that adaptation does not always have to be positive – not all changes are successful or desirable – and that the increasing "sobelisation" of the RSLMF during the Rebel War represented a form of deviant adaptation to the character of conflict presented by the RUF and the force's own limited resource base.[84] Instead of enacting more profound change, the RSLMF fell back on pre-war habits of political intervention as a response to battlefield pressure.

Following intervention, the British drove both operations and operational change. During Palliser, Colonel Thomas was seconded to the SLAF and established the Defence Operational Planning Group to co-ordinate Unholy Alliance operations. The extent to which British officers were able to exercise control over the CDF, AFRC and West Side Boys is debateable. Thomas himself conceded that the British had no means of verifying up-country CDF activity, and that the CDF liaison, 'as well as being a mystic was also a bullshitter'. Consequently, Thomas felt that CDF operations consisted of 'a lot of "blah", and you know a lot of heat and light and not much activity'.[85] Another British officer concurred, stating that while the CDF were useful for intelligence

[82] Prins, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-206; Mats Utas & Magnus Jörgel, 'The West Side Boys: Military Navigation in the Sierra Leone Civil War', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 46:3 (2008), pp. 495-500, pp. 505-6.
[83] Grissom, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-87.
[84] I am indebted to Patrick Bury for discussion around this concept.
[85] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit.*

gathering, 'a lot of display went on'.[86] Similarly, the West Side Boys were viewed by Thomas as 'a bunch of scum' who 'would only fight when it suited them'.[87] Nonetheless, the British were still able to exercise a degree of control over them during Palliser. After one incident in which the West Side Boys confronted and disarmed some CDF militiamen, Thomas threatened to destroy their bush camp with an air strike if they did not reign in their activity.[88] Notwithstanding the group's evident unreliability and dubious loyalties, as demonstrated in the later Barras incident, the West Side Boys were able to hold their own territory between Masaika and Mile 38 from the RUF, itself a useful tactical contribution.[89] The British presence appears to have had more impact in the SLAF. Seward, then embedded in the SLAF naval component, later recalled how his advice was 'accepted readily. You're always going to get one or two dissenters, because you're taking over, but I think we all tried to be fairly careful and not completely take everything from them'.[90] Similarly, when Thomas arrived SLAF officers clearly still identified themselves as members of either the AFRC or loyalist faction. Six weeks later, AFRC and SLA officers were reminiscing together in Freetown's bars. Yet, Thomas conceded that even this was somewhat superficial; while senior officers would be 'outwardly be friendly…I think underneath…it was probably too visceral between them at that level'.[91]

The limited impact of British mentoring on core SLAF behaviours was more pronounced at the tactical level. Initially, British "forward liaison teams" attempted to improve the SLA's tactical abilities by introducing the rudiments of British Army tactics, planning and command procedures. One British major mentoring 4 Battalion SLA recalled attempts to teach SLA officers the British Army's seven-step combat planning process. However, British attempts to introduce Western tactics were repeatedly frustrated by ingrained Sierra Leonean preferences: 'We tried to teach them the manoeuvreist approach, which they politely listened to, and then come the day they would just line up

[86] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*
[87] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit.*
[88] *Ibid.*; also, Utas & Jörgel, p. 504; David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (Oxford, James Currey, 2005), p. 284.
[89] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit.*
[90] Interview with Commander Sam Seward, *op. cit.*
[91] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit.*

and do what they did.'[92] Where British mentors were able to influence tactical change, it was typically only as a concession. The same officer recalled reviewing a defensive position occupied by 5 Battalion SLA around Port Loko, and remonstrating with the unit's officers over a gap in their defences. The SLA officers maintained that the unguarded ground was an area of bad Juju, known to both them and the RUF, and consequently did not need to be covered – much to the mentor's chagrin. After some discussion, some general purpose machine guns (GPMGs) were re-sited to cover the gap. When members of the RUF were later debriefed in a DDR camp, they confirmed that they would not have attacked across the undefended ground because it was an area of bad Juju. With hindsight, the mentor concluded that the 5 Battalion officers must have only re-sited their guns 'to keep us happy…our brilliant Western military minds of course, were telling us that's a brilliant place to attack…but in the end we wasted two valuable GPMG positions that weren't needed; we just assumed we knew better.'[93]

In consequence, the British appear to have adopted a pragmatic approach to improving SLAF effectiveness. As the major recalled, 'In the end you realised, OK, this is the way they're going to do it, so how can we reinforce and make better what they're going to do anyway?'[94] Consequently, IMATT's wartime focus sought to improve many of the SLAF's administrative and logistical processes, in an attempt to make their basic tactical praxis more effective:

> 'from what we could see, the way to win the battle was to be the person with the most ammunition and keep firing, so you could win a battle with logistics, by simply making sure…they were making more noise than the enemy who'd fired off all their ammunition. The enemy would go away, you could move forward'.[95]

Here, improvements in SLA fire discipline were achieved as much through new weapons as new training. The British began to replace the motley collection of automatic Kalashnikov variants then in use in the SLAF with semi-automatic Self Loading Rifles and ammunition from surplus British stocks.[96] This helped

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[92] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.* SLA unit designations in the following section have been inferred from interviewee's movements and the limited open source information on SLA unit locations during the war.
[93] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*
[94] *Ibid.*
[95] *Ibid.*
[96] In October 1999, the UK agreed to provide Sierra Leone with 7,000 rifles and 800,000 rounds of training ammunition, along with machine guns, 81mm mortars and ammunition. In May 2000,

reduce SLA ammunition expenditure, and also made SLA weapons more easily accountable. Still, Lieutenant Colonel Stadward observed that SLA soldiers disliked the weapon: 'it was heavy, you couldn't look a gangster with it'; perceptions not helped by IMATT officers' preferences for other small arms. Nonetheless, the weapon gradually gained favour with the SLA – not least because its ammunition would pass through jungle vegetation better than Kalashnikov rounds.[97] Thus the UK's re-equipment programme facilitated improvements in SLA's operational performance which tactical mentoring alone struggled to achieve.

This is not to say that British capacity building had no impact on the SLAF. The STTT courses did contribute to a rudimentary improvement in the SLA's tactical capabilities. The STTT packages included instruction in basic soldiering skills like fieldcraft, navigation, weapons handling, marksmanship, and drill. They also included some tactical training, including patrolling techniques and coaching on basic operations like reconnaissance patrols and platoon attacks,[98] as well as instruction in the laws of war carried out by the ICRC.[99] IMATT mentors working with retrained SLA battalions in the field did notice a perceptible improvement in the capabilities of units which had passed through the STTTs. Unlike pre-trained battalions, these units were deemed capable of operating collectively to a certain degree, and their discipline and motivation was also noticeably improved:

> 'A pre-trained battalion, you'd say, "Right, go left now. You five – up – move – now". And they were like, "Uh. Get up, really? OK. Guys, apparently we've got to get up. Shall we get up? We could do, I suppose, go on then get up"…And you realise what drill is for; drill is just making people act on the word of command: "We're going to go left, standby – three – two – one – go!" Executive word of command, they had learnt drill, they had learnt that the go word, or the executive word, meant do something and do it now, 'cos if you didn't do it now you'd get shouted at and it made you look bad in front of your mates. So what you did see was the ability for them to react quickly...which had been absent before, and then suddenly you could

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the British provided a further 10,000 surplus weapons, specifically Self Loading Rifles from British Army stocks, followed by 10 million rounds of ammunition in June and July 2000. Eric G. Berman, 'Re-Armament in Sierra Leone: One Year After the Lomé Peace Agreement', Small Arms Survey Occasional Paper No. 1 (Geneva, December 2000), p. 23.

[97] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*

[98] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*; Imperial War Museum Film Archives BFA 1457 L1, 'British Army in Sierra Leone, November 2000, (Tape 1)', Interview with WO2 Fred Byrne of 1st Battalion, The Prince of Wales's Own Regiment of Yorkshire.

[99] ICRC Newsletter, Sierra Leone, September 01-February 02, online at https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/newsletter-sl-2002-1.pdf, accessed on 31/07/16; ICRC, 'Update on ICRC activities in West Africa: Sierra Leone - Guinea – Liberia', 15 December 2000, online at https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/update/57jqsh.htm, accessed 31/07/16.

> manoeuvre groups of people, and keep a structure. You know, "Charlie section – forward – down". Down is an executive word of command, they would do "down", instead of wandering around a bit. Some of them would still obviously do their own thing, 'cos they were high on drugs.'[100]

Still, British officers nonetheless remained central to SLA operational effectiveness. The extent to which this retraining persisted in SLA formations is debatable. Although SLA soldiers were keen to learn, and were far more familiar with Sierra Leone's bush environment than their British instructors, members of the STTTs found that SLA soldiers' ability to absorb training was limited. One training warrant officer during STTT3, for example, commented that, 'The main thing is retention. They're not very good at retaining the information we give them. Anything written, or speaking too long, and they get distracted and bored. Practical skills is what they know best.'[101] Consequently, a number of SLA elements which had already passed through Benguema had to be later retrained owing to the high level of 'skills fade'.[102] Brigadier Le Grys, then a staff officer with UNAMSIL, observed that the SLA remained 'very much under UK command…and literally there was a UK mentor on every corner', such that during the 2002 redeployment, 'you'd have a British officer leading the patrol and the move'.[103]

Institutional changes in the SLAF also appear to have had a limited impact on SLAF behaviour during the war. Here, SLAF logistical and pay reforms are particularly illustrative. By September 2000, much of the SLA had not been paid for three months. Alongside their pay, soldiers were issued a monthly rice ration, which formed part of the SLA's basic remuneration package, and was a lifeline for soldiers' families. Yet the supply of rice was unreliable, directly impacting on operations. Battalions would refuse to move positions in advance of the ration delivery, fearing it might otherwise fail to reach them. Once issued, the strength of the battalion would drop considerably as soldiers left for Freetown to deliver a cut of the rations to their families. The ration system effectively meant that battalions were only properly manned and available for offensive operations for a two week window every month, with the battalion either waiting for rations or absent delivering them to dependents in the rear for the remaining fortnight. Consequently, the SLA planning cycle

[100] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*
[101] Imperial War Museum Film Archive, BFA 1457 L1, Interview with WO2 Fred Byrne, *op. cit.*
[102] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*
[103] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*

became one of 'Where's the two week window?', and increasing SLA operational tempo became dependent on ensuring a reliable supply of rations.[104]

However, the unreliable supply of rice was not simply a product of limited SLAF resources, but also of its institutional culture. Wartime attempts to alter such institutional practices brought British mentors into direct confrontation with the Sierra Leonean hierarchy, limiting reforms. The SLAF command tacitly accepted the practice of maintaining "ghost" soldiers on nominal rolls. Quartermasters would draw rations for a full-strength battalion of 700 men, when British advisors estimated their units contained 400 active soldiers at most. The difference in pay and rations would then be distributed among the battalion's officers, serving as an incentive for officers to maintain their units below establishment as well as diverting scant resources.[105] This practice was deeply ingrained in the neo-patrimonial culture of the Sierra Leonean military, and indeed a previous attempt to check the practice precipitated the AFRC coup.[106] This culture equally pervaded the SLAF's non-commissioned soldiers. In November 2000, for example, British mentors distributed British Army ration packs among SLA soldiers with the aim of boosting soldiers' morale prior to a major planned operation. The following morning British officers found the majority of the unit absent, away selling their British-gifted rations in the Freetown market – a fact which neither surprised nor concerned the battalion's commander.[107]

IMATT was able to take some steps to curb these practices. During the unit verification scheme, the British issued ID cards to identify legitimate soldiers from hangers-on who had not been officially registered as part of the SLAF. By the end of the process, 2000 ghost serials were removed from the SLA's establishment.[108] The exercise was resisted by SLAF officers, because although the ID cards were a bonus to soldiers, they were a threat to officers'

[104] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*
[105] *Ibid.*; International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: Time for a New Military and Political Strategy', *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[106] Gberie & Penfold, *op. cit.*
[107] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*
[108] Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, p. 24; Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*

neo-patrimonial practices.[109] Consequently, the British were conscious that reforms were implicitly limited by the need to ensure that they were not 'dishonouring and discrediting the instruments of state. If you make all the officers look like the crooks that they are, that's not good'.[110] Despite the extensive organisational restructuring and tactical retraining of the SLAF carried out by the British during the Rebel War, IMATT was not able to dislodge neo-patrimonial and fundamentally short-termist behaviours. For example, the British major serving in a Forward Liaison Team previously cited recalled issuing a number of new helmets to an SLA battalion, only to spark a brawl because the initial delivery had been insufficient to equip every soldier. Referring to the difference in organisational culture between IMATT and the SLAF which had underpinned the incident, the officer remarked that 'we just got it fundamentally wrong. You couldn't discipline them; that's our mistake'.[111] Similarly, he recalled his horror at finding that an SLA soldier in the forward trench of a defensive position had only been issued six rounds of ammunition. When asked, the unit's Quartermaster stated that the battalion always received word of an RUF advance in good time, whereupon ammunition would be issued. In the meantime, all stocks were held centrally to prevent individual soldiers selling off the battalion's ammunition for personal profit.[112]

Reforming Civil-Military Relations: Military Integration and the Norms of a National Army

The utility of military integration and national army building in effecting normative political change has been deeply contested in academic scholarship. Licklider has argued that military integration provides an overt commitment towards peace on the part of former belligerents, and helps to assuage the security dilemmas warring parties experience at the end of hostilities. Licklider also argued that the process of integration can act as a symbol of national unity, helping to reshape the identities of former combatants and wider society alike.[113] This analysis is consistent with critiques of authoritarian states' security

[109] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*
[110] *Ibid.*
[111] *Ibid.*
[112] *Ibid.*
[113] Roy Licklider (ed.), *New Armies from Old: Merging Competing Military Forces after Civil Wars* (Washington, DC, Georgetown University Press, 2014), pp 7-9. See also, Florence Gaub,

policies, which often exclude minority groups from equal service in the armed forces along political lines.[114] Practices such as coup-proofing and ethnic stacking have been shown to have a negative impact on military effectiveness,[115] but may not improve regime security.[116] Peled has also argued that such policies facilitate internal repression and predatory behaviour by armed forces,[117] somewhat reinforcing the archetypical link between national militaries and democratic civil-military relations seen in historical discussion of Western mass armies.[118] Yet the practical record of military integration is mixed. Rwanda appears to have been a success story, while South Sudan remains problematic,[119] and academic opinion differs as to whether mixed results should be interpreted as a sign of progress or of failure.[120] Krebs forcefully argued that the correlation between national armies and political identity is symptomatic rather than causal. He concluded that dominant political identities shape military demographics, but that this relationship is one way; changes in military demographics have little impact on wider social attitudes or on soldiers' own identities.[121] A number of studies have highlighted the numerous difficulties experienced by socially-diverse armies in reshaping the identity of their soldiers.[122] But there has been little conclusive attention paid to the role of

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Military Integration after Civil Wars: Multiethnic Armies, Identity and Post-Conflict Reconstruction (Abingdon, Routledge, 2011).

[114] Cynthia H. Enloe, *Ethnic Soldiers: State Security in Divided Societies* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1980).

[115] Hicham Bou Nassif, '"Second-Class": The Grievances of Sunni Officers in the Syrian Armed Forces', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 38:5 (2015), pp. 626-649; James T. Quinlivan, 'Coup-Proofing: Its Practice and Consequences in the Middle East', *International Security*, 24:2 (1999), pp. 131-65.

[116] Philip Roessler, 'The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa', *World Politics*, 63:02 (2011), pp. 300-346.

[117] Alon Peled, *A Question of Loyalty: Military Manpower Policy in Multi-Ethnic States* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1998).

[118] See Alan Forrest, *The Legacy of the French Revolutionary Wars: The Nation-in-Arms in French Republican Memory* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009); Vanda Wilcox, 'Encountering Italy: Military Service and National Identity during the First World War', *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, 3:2 (2011), pp. 283-302.

[119] Jowell, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-93; Lesley Anne Warner, 'Armed-Group Amnesty and Military Integration in South Sudan', *RUSI Journal*, 158:6 (2013), pp. 40-7.

[120] See Katherine Glassmyer & Nicholas Sambanis, 'Rebel-Military Integration and Civil War Termination', *Journal of Peace Research*, 45:3 (2008), pp. 365-84; Stephen Burgess, 'Fashioning Integrated Security Forces after Conflict', *African Security*, 1:2 (2008), pp. 69-91.

[121] Ronald R. Krebs, 'One Nation under Arms? Military Participation Policy and the Politics of Identity', *Security Studies*, 14:3 (2005), pp. 529–564; Ronald R. Krebs, 'A School for the Nation? How Military Service Does Not Build Nations, and How It Might', *International Security*, 28:4 (2004), pp. 85-124; Ronald R. Krebs, 'Military Dis-Integration: Canary in the Coal Mine?', in Licklider, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-58.

[122] Sven Gunnar Simonsen, 'Leaving Security in Safe Hands: Identity, Legitimacy and Cohesion in the New Afghan and Iraqi Armies', *Third World Quarterly*, 30:8 (2009), pp. 1483-1501; Sven Gunnar Simonsen, 'Building "National" Armies – Building Nations? Determinants of Success for

external interventionists in MRPs, and there remains little understanding of how these dynamics interact with the processes of externally-led change observed by Grissom.

This contested state of academic understanding is reflected in the Sierra Leonean experience. The British-led MRP was not the first attempt at military integration during the Rebel War. Following ECOMOG's recapture of Freetown in 1998, for instance, many junior AFRC soldiers were re-incorporated into the RSLMF.[123] The subsequent Lomé Agreement also required the disarmament of the RSLMF, CDF and RUF, to be replaced by a new national army formed from demobilised combatants of all factions. Between October 1999 and April 2000 nine UN-run DDR centres were opened across the country, and received 12,500 weapons before the Lomé peace collapsed.[124] Many of these weapons were sub-standard, however, creating an impression of less than genuine commitment to the scheme on the part of the RUF and CDF.[125] The process consequently became a focal point for political tensions, and the eventual collapse of the Lomé Agreement was triggered by RUF attempts to reclaim former combatants from the DDR scheme, whom they considered deserters.[126]

Much like Licklider's arguments, the British-run MRP deliberately sought to offset security dilemmas by attempting to make the programme as inclusive as possible. Both the RUF and CDF provided liaison officers to monitor the selection process and guarantee equal treatment. During the selection process itself, candidates spent a week at Kabata Junction, where they completed a mile and a half run, a written test, and were interviewed on their leadership and military skills by a British officer. Candidates were then ranked using a points system.[127] Pass rates at selection varied from 50 to 90 per cent, with around 80 per cent of applicants successful overall. 98 per cent of those accepted passed

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Postintervention Integration Efforts', *Armed Forces & Society*, 33:4 (2007), pp. 571-590; Alexander Watson, 'Fighting for Another Fatherland: The Polish Minority in the German Army, 1914–1918', *English Historical Review*, 126:522 (2011), pp. 1137-1166; Dana Kachtan, 'The Construction of Ethnic Identity in the Military - From the Bottom Up', *Israel Studies*, 17:3 (2012), pp. 150-175.

[123] Berman, o*p. cit.*, p. 24; Interview with Participant A24, a retired British officer in IMATT 2007-9, conducted in Exeter on 26 November 2015.

[124] These camps were situated at Lungi, Daru, Kenema, Bo, Magburaka, Makeni, and Moyamba, with two at Port Loko. Berman, o*p. cit.*, p. 24.

[125] *Ibid.*, pp. 25-6.

[126] Dorman, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-5.

[127] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*

out from initial training.[128] IMATT deliberately interpreted entry requirements liberally in order to recruit as many former combatants as possible. Stadward, for instance, was less interested in whether candidates were genuinely literate than whether they were willing to co-operate in order to make a pretence at the minimum standard. This attitude was typical of the British approach throughout the MRP. At Kabata Junction, former combatants from the RUF and CDF were intermixed, accommodated together, and treated identically. Stadward made it known that the more candidates from a (mixed) syndicate that passed, the more favourably the whole syndicate would be judged. This was manifestly untrue; each candidate was scored on their own individual merit, but the rumour encouraged co-operation rather than competition. In Stadward's words, the British approach was one of 'you're now in the army. We were trying this cohesion from the very beginning. Forget who you are, forget who you were, forget what you've done; you're in the army now.'[129] This facilitated a significant degree of integration between formerly antagonistic combatants; at least while under British supervision. IMATT officers repeatedly expressed their surprise at combatants' capacity to integrate, in stark contrast to British officers' experiences in Northern Ireland, Kosovo and Angola.[130] One IMATT officer who visited an MRP camp recalled how candidates 'all looked at each other evilly when you got them in there; 24 hours later they were playing football together and getting on with it, which I just found astonishing'.[131]

Despite these early successes, the MRP's long-term legacy on the RSLAF was limited. Here too, British intentions were somewhat frustrated by the deeply ingrained culture and politics of the Sierra Leonean military. As early as July 2002, a split had emerged in the RSLAF between the wartime SLA and the MRP entrants.[132] Stadward recalled that there 'was a certain degree of funniness' among "loyalist" SLA officers, who did not like the idea of former rebels becoming NCOs or officers.[133] Wartime tensions between "loyalists" and "rebels" were aggravated by the additional British training received by the latter,

[128] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security System Transformation, op. cit.*, p. 66.
[129] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*
[130] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*.; Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*; Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit.*
[131] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*
[132] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone After Elections', *op. cit.*, p. 10.
[133] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*

which was perceived to improve relative career progression.[134] These antagonisms persisted, and were still observable to IMATT officers serving in 2004.[135] As late as 2012, IMATT officers noted a perception among former RUF soldiers that their wartime affiliation continued to disadvantage their subsequent military careers.[136] Indeed, the RSLAF's institutional commitment to reintegration seems dubious, given that MRP entrants were only offered one-year initial contracts and their RSLAF ranks were considered temporary, subject to review six months after entry.[137] In parallel fashion, ex-combatants who elected to demobilise rather than join the MRP also struggled to re-integrate into post-war society. Respondents to perception studies conducted in 2005-6 described both the CDF and "Ghetto Boys" – urban gangs formed from wartime militias – as continuing security threats. Other ex-combatants took up work as motorbike taxis and subsequently formed biker gangs; reservoirs of civil disorder which later concerned both GOSL and IMATT.[138]

Many of the institutional mechanisms intended to support military integration were not fully implemented. Some of IMATT's initial selection practices during the MRP were at odds with later attempts to professionalise the RSLAF. For instance, Stadward perpetuated the belief among MRP candidates at Kabata Junction that he was a witch-doctor, whose lazy eye could see into their souls and tell if they were lying, in order to solicit honesty in the selection tests.[139] Similarly, some ex-combatants experienced significant difficulties in adjusting to military institutional life, resulting in higher rates of discharge and a perception of persecution. As one IMATT officer explained:

> 'more of the RUF and the Kamajor…were given the push, frankly, because the behaviours they exhibited were probably the worst and therefore the most

[134] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone After Elections', *op. cit.*, p. 10.
[135] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[136] Interview with Participant A5, a senior British officer who served in Sierra Leone, conducted in Exeter on 14 June 2015.
[137] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security System Transformation, op. cit.*, pp. 65-6.
[138] Magnus Jörgel & Mats Utas, 'The Mano River Basin Area: Formal and Informal Security Providers in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone', Swedish Defence Research Agency (Stockholm, 2007), pp. 44-50; International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: The Election Opportunity', Africa Report No. 129 (Dakar/Brussels, 12 July 2007), p. 5; Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A22, a British Army officer serving in IMATT in 2008-9, conducted in Shrewsbury on 24 November 2015.
[139] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*

> problematic…they had a lot of problems with some of the more disturbed former child soldiers in the RUF and the CDF who…were not amenable to discipline'.[140]

While IMATT stressed the importance of distributing former rebels throughout the force, and more generally of posting soldiers away from their tribal homelands, in reality this proved difficult.[141] As Brigadier Le Grys explained, attempts were made to cross-post officers, but 'you can't expect soldiers to start moving across the country at vast expense when they haven't got any money'.[142] Consequently, one southern battalion gained a reputation as 'the RUF battalion' due to the origins of its soldiers.[143] This only served to retrench antagonisms, and it seems this battalion expressed persistent fears that it was particularly vulnerable to downsizings for political reasons.[144]

This last concern does not appear to have been totally unfounded. Major General Alfred Nelson-Williams, writing as the RSLAF CDS some years after the MRP, noted that ex-combatants were 'the first casualties of the downsizing phase for officers' in 2004 and 2005.[145] Ostensibly, Nelson-Williams attributed this to poor performance on staff courses, but he also made it clear that he viewed the commissioning of ex-combatants as an overtly political attempt to marginalise APC-supporting SLA officers.[146] This was true – at least insofar as the MRP was seen as a way of rebalancing the social demographics of the force to prevent military praetorianism. Later British policies intended to professionalise the military – themselves designed to improve civil-military relations and normative behaviour in the RSLAF – inadvertently compounded this political antagonism. The British revamped military educational standards, and established the Armed Forces Education Centre to provide literacy and numeracy training in the RSLAF. But at the same time, these educational requirements appear to have disproportionately disadvantaged former CDF and

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[140] Interview with Participant A17, a senior British Army officer in IMATT 2004-5, conducted in London on 26 October 2015.
[141] Interview with Brigadier (retd.) David Santa-Olalla DSO MC, Commander IMATT 2005, conducted in London on 29 June 2015; Interview with Colonel (retd.) Jamie Martin, Commander IMATT 2011-3, conducted in Dorset on 21 July 2015.
[142] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, o*p. cit.*; Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, o*p. cit.*
[143] Interview with Participant A22, o*p. cit.*; Interview with Participant A24, o*p. cit.*
[144] Interview with Participant A22, o*p. cit.*
[145] Alfred Nelson-Williams, 'Restructuring the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces', in Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson (eds.), *Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone 1997 - 2007: Views from the Front Line* (Berlin, Lit, 2010), p. 128. This point was also conceded by a senior British officer involved in planning RSLAF promotional pathways, Interview with Participant A17, o*p. cit.*
[146] Nelson-Williams, o*p. cit.*, p. 124.

RUF members.[147] Moreover, the military remained dominated by ex-RSLMF officers (either "loyalists" or ex-AFRC) with historic grievances against both the RUF and CDF.

To a significant extent, the limitations of the MRP reflect IMATT's wider inability to redress deeply ingrained neo-patrimonial and political cultures. Senior promotions, such as the appointment of a Sierra Leonean officer to the role of Commander Joint Forces in 2002, required the direct involvement of the President; a reality readily accepted by IMATT. As one senior IMATT officer commented, 'trying to make the place coup-proof was part of the deal'.[148] The RSLAF chain of command also remained subject to both political and patrimonial subversion. The same officer described how RSLAF commanders were 'forever short circuiting the chain of command' through tribal and patrimonial links: 'Whenever I was talking to CDS in the Ministry of Defence or anywhere else, there'd always be a queue of people bringing gifts and things, and some really inappropriately junior officers would come and see CDS and ask for favours, or bring gifts'.[149] IMATT attempted to reinforce the formal chain of command, largely through constant explanation and monitoring. Here, IMATT hoped to replicate the dynamics of professional emulation described by Farrell in the interwar Irish Army,[150] promoting change through normative exchange – as if by an osmosis of values. Prima facie, this dynamic appears to have had some limited success in historical examples of military training missions.[151] In Sierra Leone though, favouritism and patrimonialism were so deeply ingrained that the SLA were continually 'flicking back to it, and you'd have to remind them again', though they 'were always delightfully charming about it'.[152]

IMATT officers tended to downplay the legacy of MRP tensions in the later development of the RSLAF. A senior IMATT officer serving in 2004 later commented that, 'You occasionally heard a comment from somebody, about somebody else, about where they came from. But that was it…we saw no real

[147] Interview with Participant A17, o*p. cit.*; Interview with Participant A5, o*p. cit.*
[148] Interview with Participant A14, o*p. cit.*
[149] *Ibid.*
[150] Farrell, 'World Culture and the Irish Army', *op. cit.*, pp. 69-90.
[151] Goldman, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-68; Dunn, *op. cit.*; Sater, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-41; Stephanie Cronin, *Armies and State-Building in the Modern Middle East: Politics, Nationalism and Military Reform* (London, I.B. Tauris, 2014), pp. 83-132.
[152] Interview with Participant A14, *op. cit.*

evidence of that being a barrier to development of the armed forces.'[153] Brigadier Santa-Olalla, Commander IMATT in 2005, likewise argued that 'one heard from different people that so-and-so had been reintegrated into the RSLAF, but as far as I was aware they were such small numbers I don't think it was any longer of relevance.'[154] An IMATT major in Sierra Leone in 2007-8 similarly concluded that 'they'd just moved on'.[155] Equally, many officers did not ask too many questions about the social and political demographics of the military. A senior IMATT officer serving with the RSLAF in 2002 stated bluntly that:

> 'There was tension, yes…but generally it was handled by the Sierra Leonean commanders themselves, and it seemed to work for the most part…it wasn't my role to judge people on the basis of their role during the civil war. It was my role to use the army to do a job.'[156]

Brigadier Cholerton, Commander IMATT in 2007, similarly conceded that, 'There was unit there, and we just tried to work with that unit, we didn't investigate who came from where too closely.'[157] To a significant degree, the MRP was viewed by British officers as a mechanism for immediate political stabilisation at the war's end, of little relevance to the longer-term development of the force. Despite initial success under British supervision, as a top-down externally-directed reform mechanism, the MRP failed to displace neo-patrimonial power structures in the RSLAF, and IMATT did not pursue the point.

The Post-War Politics of Institutional Change

Despite notable British investment in the wartime SLAF, its fundamental behavioural norms remained largely unchanged, limiting both combat effectiveness and civil-military accountability. While the RSLMF experienced significant combat pressure prior to British intervention, it had shown itself consistently unable to sufficiently adapt to the RUF threat. Subsequent change was led from without, driven primarily by British commanders according to priorities as they perceived them. While this clearly did produce some change, the attitudes and behaviours required to sustain this remained absent, leading to a reliance on British support. To an extent, more profound normative change

[153] Interview with Participant A11, a senior British officer in Sierra Leone in 2004, conducted in London on 24 July 2015.
[154] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*
[155] Interview with Participant A24, *op. cit.*
[156] Interview with Participant A14, *op. cit.*
[157] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*

was precluded by the British military's own focus on immediate stabilisation. However, the formal end of hostilities facilitated a more fundamental restructuring of the RSLAF. In 2003, GOSL produced a Defence White Paper to publicly outline its strategic priorities for defence; largely focused on the democratisation and professionalisation of the RSLAF.[158] At around the same time, IMATT embarked upon its first and only major infrastructure project; a barracks rebuilding programme called Operation Pebu, or "shelter" in Mende.[159] Yet these post-war attempts to institutionalise change were frustrated by neo-patrimonial resistance from the RSLAF officer corps.

The 2003 White Paper was a clear statement of normative intent. The document hoped 'to instil in the hearts and minds of our Service men and women a set of values that would make them become loyal and accountable to the government of the day, regardless of its political composition, while retaining their professional effectiveness.'[160] The White Paper mandated the MOD to oversee RSLAF transformation in conjunction with IMATT.[161] GOSL's primary intention behind the White Paper was to explain ongoing defence reforms to both the public and the RSLAF.[162] This was deemed necessary because, in the words of the Sierra Leonean civil servant Al-Hassan Kondeh, the military had been previously 'run as a more or less secret cult with little or no accountability'.[163] Although the White Paper resulted in a clear statement of normative intent, the process of drafting the White Paper proved to be deeply contested. The Sierra Leonean drafting committee included Kondeh, who later complained that IMATT had attempted to undermine their independent agency. Kondeh stated that Commander IMATT refused to discuss unilateral funding preferences, on the basis that UK money and decisions were not accountable to the Sierra Leonean MOD. Similarly, IMATT had insinuated 'that civilian ministry employees lacked the competence to make informed contributions' and one IMATT commander bluntly refuted the White Paper Committee's findings from

[158] GOSL, 'Defence White Paper', *op. cit.*
[159] Aldo Gaeta, 'Operation Pebu and the Ministry of Defence', in Albrecht & Jackson (eds.), *Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone 1997 – 2007, op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.
[160] GOSL, 'Defence White Paper', *op. cit.*, para 2003.
[161] *Ibid.*, cover page.
[162] *Ibid.*, foreword by President Kabbah; Al-Hassan Kharamoh Kondeh, 'Formulating Sierra Leone's Defence White Paper', in Albrecht & Jackson (eds.), *Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone 1997 – 2007, op. cit.*, pp. 150-1; Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.*
[163] Kondeh, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

its unit visits.[164] Speaking of IMATT's attempts to control the reform process in the MOD, the Sierra Leonean civil servant Emmanuel Coker remarked that, 'We had to bulldoze our way in'.[165] Such incidents reflect a conflict between IMATT and Sierra Leonean officials over the direction and control of defence reform.

While IMATT and GOSL differed in their approach to normative change, RSLAF officers resented the civilian presence IMATT had introduced to the MOD altogether. They viewed it as a de facto indictment of the military's competence, as well as a constraint on their independence. Following the White Paper, DFID conducted a review of the MOD with the intention of further institutionalising the civilian presence in the ministry.[166] Although wartime IMATT reforms had expanded the civilian presence in the MOD, this had been necessarily ad hoc, creating significant discrepancies between the civil and military components. For example, the civilian Director General was paid at Grade 13 and his deputy at Grade 9, while the CDS sat at Grade 14 and his assistant chiefs at Grade 13. Some military officers in the MOD were being paid 400 per cent more than civil servants working at the same level.[167] The re-grading of Sierra Leonean civil servants faced concerted resistance from RSLAF officers. Alfred Nelson-Williams, then an RSLAF staff officer in the MOD, complained that civil servants in the MOD 'were not properly trained or qualified for their appointments'.[168] RSLAF officers declined to engage with the White Paper drafting committee, and subsequently boycotted MOD procurement meetings, claiming they were rigged by the civil service.[169] While IMATT officers shared their RSLAF colleagues' low opinion of MOD civil servants, largely owing to a high rate of perceived corruption,[170] IMATT nonetheless supported the principle of civilian control. The UK imposed the re-grading on the RSLAF, and Kondeh conceded that much of IMATT's

[164] Kondeh, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-8.
[165] Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone 1997-2013: Defence, Diplomacy and Development in Action* (London, Routledge, 2014), p. 58.
[166] Public Sector Reform Unit, 'Management and Functional Review of the Ministry of Defence' (2004); Emmanuel B. Osho Coker, 'Governance and Security Sector Reform', in Albrecht & Jackson (eds.), *Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone 1997 – 2007, op. cit.*, pp. 114-5.
[167] Public Sector Reform Unit, *op. cit.*, p. 2; Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100.
[168] Nelson-Williams, *op.cit.*, pp. 124-5; Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
[169] Kondeh, *op. cit.*, pp. 157-8.
[170] Interview with Participant A13, a senior British officer in IMATT; Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*

obstreperousness during the White Paper process resulted from British attempts to marginalise senior RSLAF officers whose agendas it viewed as reactionary.[171]

However, the British ability to impose change on the RSLAF had clear limits. IMATT had assumed a significant degree of executive control over the RSLAF in order to pursue the war, but it was apparent by 2003 that this was inhibiting sustainable RSLAF ownership of reforms. The MOD's civilian Director General, for instance, described IMATT's restructuring of the MOD as 'far too complex for Sierra Leoneans to grasp'.[172] One IMATT officer posted to the MOD in March 2003 found that the MOD was driven by IMATT officers. IMATT had 'developed a battle rhythm of committees for the MOD that would run, which was running at a pace which we could run at, but they couldn't.'[173] The institution itself was composed of three distinct groups – IMATT officers, RSLAF officers and Sierra Leonean civil servants – 'which interact with little obvious team work or cohesion'. Consequently, Sierra Leonean staff were 'content to let the IMATT team drive…but resent the style and pace'.[174] Moreover, the RSLAF proved unable to staff the new organisational structures IMATT had introduced. In 2002, the air and naval components had lost their independent status, becoming the Air Wing and Naval Wing of the RSLAF, and the force was also reorganised under two parallel headquarters. The Joint Force Command became responsible for the force's combat troops, while the Joint Support Command was established to oversee logistics.[175] The new structure envisaged three infantry brigades and a garrison in Freetown, with each brigade consisting of three infantry battalions, plus assorted support units under direct command of one of the twin headquarters.[176] But by late 2003, the MOD was 50 per cent undermanned (41 per cent with IMATT officers included), while the Joint Force Command HQ was 41 per cent undermanned (24 per cent with IMATT), and the

[171] Kondeh, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
[172] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 99-100. This view is reiterated in the RSLAF's official history, see RSLAF, 'Establishment and Development', *op. cit.*, p. 7.
[173] Interview with Participant A16, a senior British officer serving in IMATT in 2003-4, conducted in Somerset on 10 October 2015.
[174] Participant A16, 'IMATT SL Support to SL MOD – initial impressions', unpublished IMATT briefing document (28 March 2003).
[175] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
[176] Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief', *op. cit.*, pp. 29-33.

Joint Support Command HQ was similarly 28 per cent undermanned (reduced to nine per cent by IMATT staff).[177]

IMATT consequently established a committee of Sierra Leonean officers to review the RSLAF's senior command and control structures. This disbanded the Joint Support Command and subsumed its functions into the MOD and the Joint Force Command.[178] IMATT supported the change on the basis that the previous IMATT-imposed design had proved dysfunctional. Colonel Stack, for example, remarked that the previous structure 'didn't work; it was a failure, it never worked'.[179] While the closure of the Joint Support Command brought the official organisation into line with the functional reality of how the RSLAF wished to operate, it also removed a central tenet of IMATT's initial normative restructuring of the RSLAF. Indeed, the division between Joint Force and Joint Support Commands had been deliberately established in 2002 as an attempt to make the military more politically accountable, by ensuring no single commander had unilateral access to both the troops and the logistics required to overthrow the government.[180] The disbandment of the Joint Support Command barely two years after it was established highlights the limitations of IMATT's initial wartime and post-war reforms on RSLAF norms.

The starkest example of RSLAF resistance to IMATT-led change can be seen in the failure of Operation Pebu. Pebu planned to renovate or build from scratch three brigade HQs and eight battalion barracks, enabling a formation training cycle to begin by May 2004.[181] It also facilitated a rationalisation of RSLAF dispositions by consolidating the force from over 50 sites into a few centralised locations.[182] Much of the RSLAF's barrack accommodation had been destroyed during the war, and many soldiers lived in tented accommodation or local villages, exacerbating the difficulties of command and

[177] IMATT, 'Command structures Review Team Initial Output Briefing to DPOC', unpublished IMATT briefing presentation (2003), slides 3-5; Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*
[178] Kondeh, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-5; Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*; Alfred Nelson-Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-148, pp. 128-9; Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-1.
[179] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[180] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*; Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-9.
[181] Gaeta, *op. cit.*, p. 60.
[182] *Ibid.*, p. 59; IMATT, 'IMATT SL Review' unpublished IMATT briefing presentation (July 2003), slides 6-7.

control.[183] IMATT considered that the poor standard of RSLAF accommodation meant that 'in terms of the moral component of fighting power, and providing for your armed forces, it just didn't work'.[184] Although Pebu was intended to facilitate military training, it therefore also contained an overtly normative element. As Colonel Stack later remarked, there was a feeling that 'contented soldiers, being paid, being given their rice, with a home, were unlikely to topple the government'.[185] Indeed, one of the public concerns raised in consultations during the preparation of the Defence White Paper was the state of RSLAF accommodation.[186]

The project was to be jointly funded by DFID and GOSL, and saw the refurbishment of existing barracks and the new-build brigade HQs by specialist contractors, while the remaining battalion sites were to be built using mud bricks by the infantry battalions themselves.[187] The project was significantly redesigned in June 2003 to provide more salubrious family accommodation.[188] As the design expanded, Hydraform machines were purchased from South Africa to speed up progress. These used a mix of local mud and concrete to manufacture bricks.[189] By February 2004, however, little progress had been made. Estimates suggested that only 12 per cent of soldiers' accommodation could be completed by the original summer 2004 deadline, with the programme now expected to take six years to complete. Additional brick-making machines were purchased, but DFID refused an IMATT request for additional funding and instead commissioned an independent review of the project. The subsequent report warned that Pebu 'could result in the creation of new slums'. By the end of 2005, all efforts were subsequently focused on finishing just two battalion sites (those closest to the border) pooling both DFID and GOSL funds.[190] The project was finally wound down in 2007.[191]

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[183] GOSL, 'Defence White Paper', *op. cit.*, paras 5014-7.
[184] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*
[185] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[186] Kondeh, *op. cit.*, p. 153. It is possible that these concerns were used as a political tool by Kabbah's political opponents, leading to the June 2003 changes in the Op Pebu programme. Gaeta, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
[187] Gaeta, *op. cit.*, p. 63; Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[188] Gaeta, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-1.
[189] *Ibid.*, pp. 63-4; Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*
[190] Gaeta, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-68; Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[191] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*

In part, the failure of Operation Pebu reflects a degree of over-ambition on the part of IMATT. Aldo Gaeta, the UK civilian adviser to the Sierra Leone MOD between 2003 and 2006, concluded that 'the initial planning timeframe was entirely unrealistic',[192] and even went so far as to state that Pebu 'failed on so many counts that it is best described as conceptually flawed'.[193] Significant difficulties were experienced in the management of the project, and one IMATT officer tasked to review the Pebu command structure concluded that it initially had no 'single project manager, no clear reporting structure, [and] no overall co-ordination'.[194] Similar problems were experienced in the project's implementation. Gaeta asserted that the hydraform machines were procured 'based on an advertisement in the back of a local magazine' without trials or visits to the manufacturers, an allegation some IMATT officers partially denied.[195] Regardless, the hydraform technology proved entirely unsuitable to Sierra Leone, requiring a different soil type, constant maintenance, and significant water; failings recognised by IMATT.[196] Wells were dug during the rainy season which then went dry as the water table dropped for the remainder of the year.[197] Both DFID and GOSL procurement processes were subsequently criticised, and Pebu suffered from a considerable degree of corruption.[198] As one IMATT officer concluded, the shortcomings of Pebu were as much 'about the weaknesses of some of the skills we have as soldiers…we hadn't the skills on our side to recognise how you implement a complex infrastructure project.'[199]

Equally though, Operation Pebu failed because IMATT proved unable to convince the RSLAF of its utility. There was a significant gap between IMATT's intent and the RSLAF's expectations. Pebu originally envisioned single room mud-brick houses with corrugated iron roofs and communal ablutions. However, the RSLAF aspired to bungalows similar to 1950s colonial military accommodation in Sierra Leone, with multiple rooms, running water, glass windows, electric lighting and indoor plumbing; a standard beyond the RSLAF's

[192] Gaeta, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
[193] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[194] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*
[195] *Ibid.*; Gaeta, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-4.
[196] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit;* Gaeta, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
[197] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[198] Gaeta, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
[199] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*

budget and out of keeping with the rest of Sierra Leonean society.[200] Consequently, IMATT officers blamed implementation issues on a lack of RSLAF motivation. One IMATT commander stated bluntly that, in his opinion, Pebu didn't work because the RSLAF were 'basically lazy…they're lazy and corrupt'.[201] Another officer recalled a widely-held IMATT view that ultimately the RSLAF 'weren't that interested. You know, "the Romans used to build a sodding camp every night. Why can't the RSLAF just put their backs into this?"'[202] For their part, the RSLAF wasted no opportunity to remind IMATT that Pebu was offering 'crap accommodation';[203] a dynamic encouraged by the fact that DFID was simultaneously funding the construction of police barracks to a much higher standard through contractors.[204] This RSLAF view was exacerbated by the fact that at their compound at Leicester Square, IMATT officers in Freetown lived in the kind of accommodation to which the RSLAF aspired, but which the UK refused to provide.[205]

Progress on Pebu sites proved uneven, further highlighting the politically contested nature of the project. IMATT officers who visited the more successful sites attributed much of progress – and by the same token, many of the problems elsewhere – to the attitude and commitment of individual commanding officers.[206] A number of IMATT officers later conceded that the idea of untrained RSLAF infantrymen becoming capable and enthusiastic builders was overly ambitious.[207] If the RSLAF lacked commitment to the project, the Sierra Leonean MOD had similar reservations and effectively declined to participate in project oversight altogether.[208] This evidently exorcised IMATT, one officer flippantly remarking that 'the MOD couldn't have given a fuck'.[209] The

[200] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys *op. cit.*; Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*; Gaeta, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
[201] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*
[202] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[203] *Ibid.*
[204] Gaeta, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
[205] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*; Interview with Sheka Mansaray, National Security Adviser and Special Adviser to the President of Sierra Leone, 1998-2000, and head of the Sierra Leonean Civil Service, 2001-2008, conducted in Freetown on 7 May 2008 by Arthur Boutellis as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 16, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/sheka-mansaray, accessed 25/05/16; Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*
[206] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*
[207] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*
[208] Gaeta, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
[209] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*

discrepancies between British and Sierra Leonean expectations of Pebu became highly charged because, as one IMATT officer observed, 'a lot of IMATT credibility was bound up in it'.[210] Pebu simultaneously exposed tensions between DFID and IMATT. Just as the RSLAF resented the Pebu plan IMATT had proposed, frustrating IMATT, so DFID became agitated with IMATT at the spiralling costs, levels of corruption, and lack of tangible progress.[211] Even before the project was eventually abandoned, it had become 'a stick [for the RSLAF] to beat IMATT and the British Government with'.[212]

RSLAF resistance to the institutional components of civil-military reform was reflected in GOSL's continued political distrust of the military. In line with the Defence White Paper's focus on soldiers' welfare, in 2003 the RSLAF began making preparations to pay emoluments to the next of kin of soldiers killed in action during the Rebel War. A verification exercise was undertaken, and further plans drawn up to provide support to soldiers wounded in action. However, the settlement scheme was unfunded in the 2004 defence allocation, which was approximately US$5.5 million short of the requested budget. Eventually, IMATT used DFID money to pay 3,029 bereaved relatives in 2004 and 290 wounded servicemen in 2005, but 345 certified medically disabled personnel were still awaiting payment in 2010.[213] This reticence in paying benefits for killed or wounded servicemen partly stemmed from GOSL's financial hardships, but it was equally evident to IMATT officers that the plan had stalled at the political level,[214] highlighting the legacy of bitterness still felt by the SLPP towards the RSLAF. Public confidence in the armed forces remained equally sour. One senior IMATT officer recalled a brief public panic in 2004 after RSLAF uniforms, sent to a local laundry to be laundered prior to re-issue, sparked rumours that rebels were returning to Freetown.[215] Despite

[210] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[211] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[212] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*
[213] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 109-110; Alfred Nelson-Williams, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-3; Kondeh, *op. cit.*, p. 157; Barry J. Le Grys, 'British Military Involvement in Sierra Leone, 2001-2006', in Albrecht & Jackson (eds.), *Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone 1997 - 2007*, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
[214] Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.*
[215] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*

GOSL unwillingness to pay emoluments, IMATT officers still considered that 'the civilian element [in the MOD] were a bit fearful of a military coup'.[216]

As difficulties with these programmes unfolded during 2003, it became increasingly evident that IMATT's activity lacked strategic direction. IMATT had yet to develop a long-term plan, either for the RSLAF's development or its own withdrawal, and consequently objectives had become heavily liked to the one-year tenure of individual IMATT commanders; a point IMATT itself began to recognise.[217] Brigadier Adrian Freer, Commander IMATT in 2003, became convinced of the need to develop clear training goals for the RSLAF around which IMATT could structure its activity. But at the same time, Freer conceded that longer term IMATT objectives were somewhat vague: 'what were we seeking to train them to do? You know, what was the objective here? And I don't think that that was very clear.'[218] This recognition led to the development of a ten-year plan for IMATT-RSLAF defence reform, called Plan 2010, which was launched in 2004, and will be examined in the next chapter.

Conclusions

British intervention did produce some change in the SLAF. British mentoring at battalion level provided SLAF units with direction and normative guidance as well as technical expertise. Advisers also acted as an additional link between the tactical and operational levels, bolstering command and control. STTT courses reconstituted and retrained entire SLAF battalions, increasing individual soldiers' basic infantry skills and reasserting military discipline, and in so doing provided a foundation for tactics based on fire and manoeuvre. The British developed the organisational structure of the SLAF, including its headquarters and logistics systems, as well facilities like AFTC Benguema. The British also built on pre-Palliser planning conducted by SILSEP to rejuvenate the MOD. Given the limited strategic impact of Palliser and Barras alone, Ucko has consequently argued that this capacity-building activity, alongside diplomatic efforts, proved 'critical to its [intervention's] overall outcome'.[219] However, the

[216] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*
[217] Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.*; IMATT, 'IMATT SL Review', *op. cit.*, slide 28; Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-5.
[218] Interview with Major General (retd.) Adrian Freer OBE, Commander IMATT 2002-3, conducted in London on 29 July 2015.
[219] Ucko, *op. cit.,* p. 6.

operational and strategic benefits of wartime capacity building should not be confused with fundamental change in the nature of SLAF military capacity, or its political quality.

While the SLAF clearly became more coherent under British tutelage, it does not appear to have become dramatically more effective. Although the RUF were defeated, even retrained SLAF battalions were still considered incapable of reliably operating independently of British support. In consequence, the most decisive elements of combat power applied against the RUF came from British, UN or mercenary forces. Here, the redeployment of the military in 2002 is particularly illustrative. Although SLA battalions were able to conduct basic tactical moves, they remained under close British supervision despite the fact that the environment was increasingly benign. Moreover, the need to redeploy the military was in no small part the product of the force's continued political unreliability. Both IMATT and GOSL felt that the army had to be removed from population centres prior to the elections, and British officers deliberately engineered the operation to ensure the two main branches of GOSL's military capacity – the SLAF and the CDF – did not meet, owing to their continued political animosity.

The lack of fundamental change in the SLAF during the Rebel War does not appear to have been the product of any deep-seated resentment at British interference, or unwillingness to acknowledge IMATT's advice, at least at the tactical level. As the previous chapter noted, the British military intervention produced extensive good will among both the Sierra Leonean population and military. British officers sought to shape SLAF behaviour through a mixture of advice, example and coercion, working alongside the SLAF chain of command and embedded within it. While this gave the British the ability to issue orders and carry out both de facto and de jure organisational changes, the British hoped that their presence would equally influence SLAF soldiers' culture and behaviour through continuous processes of learning and exchange. Lieutenant Colonel Simpson, who served in IMATT after the Rebel War, described this approach as one of 'moral suasion', in which 'advisors exercised a combination of moral, intellectual and pragmatic influence over their Sierra Leonean

counterparts';[220] a process which might reasonably be described as normative isomorphism or cultural osmosis. While the SLAF readily accepted the prospect of British training and wartime command and control, IMATT's ability to change deeply-seated SLAF practices and norms through 'moral suasion' alone appears dubious. British mentors serving at the front failed to convince their SLAF colleagues of the merits of British tactics and planning, and nor did British direction reduce SLAF belief in the tactical salience of Juju. The impact of British "train and equip" capacity building during the Rebel War mirrors the mixed success of similar peacetime programmes – a stark example being the repeated attempts to create an effective state army in Afghanistan during the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which failed to overcome local cultural and political preferences.[221]

Instead, much of the change evinced in the SLAF was the product of direct British control over the force. During Palliser, the British effectively assumed command of the SLAF and co-ordinated the operations of the Unholy Alliance. IMATT officers maintained this executive function until after the Rebel War finished – the RSLAF Joint Force Command, for instance, was only assumed by a Sierra Leonean officer following the 2002 elections, and this was not the last executive post in the RSLAF held by an IMATT officer. Arguably, this executive control gave the British an ability to rapidly impose change on the SLAF to meet the needs of the war. Equally, though, it also meant that the durability of many changes became reliant on the presence of British or IMATT officers. Certainly, those changes affected in the SLAF broadly followed the British institutional model, and the lack of profound cultural acceptance of some of these innovations was evident in RSLAF resistance to IMATT's post-war efforts to institutionalise change. Yet many of these changes were not inappropriate to the context in which they were implemented, and did contribute to an improvement in SLAF capability. In part, this may be because the RSLMF originated in a British colonial military model, and so many of the British military practices advocated during and after Palliser were not totally alien to the SLAF.

Farrell has argued that the ability to carry out tactical adaptation during wartime is reliant on a series of organisational conditions, namely: poor

[220] Simpson, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
[221] Cronin, *op. cit.*

institutional memory, decentralisation of command and control, and personnel turnover. Moreover, he suggests that adaptation can either exploit core competencies already held, or explore new practices, but it does not fundamentally require institutional change at the point of adaptation.[222] Harkness and Hunzeker have added additional criterion to these, including flexible leadership, feedback loops, and a clear threat.[223] Grissom contends that the last of these – the importance of direct threat – was inhibited in the ANA by ISAF presence, simultaneously establishing a delineation between internal adaptation and external intervention.[224]

In Sierra Leone, many of these factors were clearly present before British intervention. The RSLMF and SLAF certainly had a poor institutional memory and high personnel turn-over. Many of their soldiers were drafted during the war and much of the force's institutional fabric was eroded during the conflict, also impeding centralised command and control. The fluid politics of various military factions certainly suggests a degree of flexibility in officers' attitudes, though it is unclear whether this extended to tactical praxis. An existential threat to the SLAF as an institution was certainly also present prior to British intervention, notwithstanding the presence of other international troops in Sierra Leone. Yet the RSLMF's adaptation prior to British intervention appears mediocre and certainly uneven to the threat posed by the RUF. The initial expansion of the Kamajor militia groups did provide extra military capacity for the fight against the RUF, but as seen in Chapter 4, the increasingly political nature of the RSLMF led to a rift between the military and the CDF. Some tactical adaptations were undertaken; notably the use of improvised "technicals" to compensate for reduced tactical competence and task cohesion. Still, instead of pursuing more profound military adaptation, the RSLMF proved unequal to the wartime pressures it faced, and gradually disintegrated as a coherent military institution. Here, Harkness and Hunzeker's assertion that the political context of conflict also affects the prospects for military adaptation is certainly supported by the

[222] Farrell, 'Improving in War', *op. cit.*, pp. 570-3.
[223] Harkness and Hunzeker, *op. cit.*, pp. 781-5.
[224] Grissom, *op. cit.*

case of the SLAF,[225] in a wartime parallel to Avant's study of civil-military relations and change during peacetime.[226]

If British military support impeded some adaptive dynamics, it supported others. The existential threat to the SLAF as an organisation may have reduced following Operation Palliser, but the British presence undoubtedly strengthened feedback loops monitoring performance and change in the SLAF. Initially at least, the British presence did not undo those ad hoc SLAF adaptations which afforded a degree of capability. Instead, they sought to improve these where possible, including through wider institutional reforms. Only subsequently did the British seek to replace these adaptations with a more fundamental retraining and institutional reform programme. To a certain extent, therefore, some of the wartime changes in the SLAF might be characterised as the product of *external adaptation within the force*, rather than a top-down, externally imposed model of reform. Consequently, the relationship between external change and wartime adaptation in the SLAF appears far more complex than in present understandings. The growing delineations in current scholarship between wartime adaptation and peacetime reform, and between ground-up, internal innovation and external, top-down transformation seem somewhat arbitrary in the case of external intervention; especially as many of the changes the British pursued in the SLAF were essentially adaptive, simultaneously ground-up and top-down, and were supported by later institutional reforms.

While much of the British effort was aimed at improving SLAF military effectiveness, British wartime intervention did attempt to reshape the civil-military and political behaviours of the force. Indeed, to a significant extent, the neo-patrimonial norms of SLAF behaviour undermined both political reliability and military effectiveness, necessitating this dual approach. Here, however, in a parallel to Grissom's study of the ANA, British attempts faced resistance from RSLAF officers along political or neo-patrimonial lines. SLAF officers were not sympathetic to more transparent pay and ration issue practices, limiting the pace of change. They actively embraced the reintroduction of honours, but sought to subvert British intentions by attempting to apply neo-patrimonial norms to awards. After the war, changes which threatened the neo-patrimonial

[225] Harkness & Hunzeker, *op. cit.*
[226] Avant, *op. cit.*

interests of senior officers were resisted with greater alacrity, while the civil-military aspirations of the MRP were also not realised. The RSLAF resented the civilianisation of the MOD, criticised the equal status afforded to civil servants, and declined to engage with the White Paper drafting process and areas of subsequent civil service supremacy, such as in acquisitions. Even where there were tangible gains to be had from IMATT activity, such as in Operation Pebu, RSLAF officers' insistence on maintaining pre-war levels of status effectively undermined change. Thus, RSLAF institutionalisation of change, both during and immediately after the Rebel War, was complicated by the established cultural norms of the force, which proved largely immune to wartime British mentoring. Consequently, the limited improvements which were achieved were the product of direct British control; in effect, externally-led adaptation, notwithstanding the embedding of British officers in the SLAF hierarchy. By 2003, the lack of fundamental change in RSLAF normative behaviour prompted a more concerted IMATT strategy for reform, culminating in the launch of Plan 2010 in 2004. It is to this period of reform which the next chapter now turns.

7. Building the New Model Army: Institutionalising Accountability in the RSLAF, 2003-7

This chapter examines the approach to reform developed by IMATT under the banner of Plan 2010, which was launched in 2004, until the change of government in Sierra Leone in 2007. As the previous chapter concluded, the SLAF did adapt following British intervention in the Rebel War, but the limited extent of change proved insufficient to defeat the RUF without significant international aid. More profound wartime adaptation was largely resisted by SLAF officers because it threatened their neo-patrimonial power structures; a behavioural norm that proved largely immune to British mentoring and leadership. The British sought to displace neo-patrimonial practices in the SLAF through institutional reform, but the initial British focus on short-term stabilisation meant that these ad hoc attempts were largely frustrated by the post-war RSLAF's continuing neo-patrimonial proclivities. Plan 2010 was subsequently drafted to provide a more coherent strategy for the long-term civil-military reform of the RSLAF.

Existing scholarship on peacetime military reform derives from Posen's seminal work on the causes of military doctrinal change. Posen concluded that because armed forces are inherently resistant to change, civilian elites force reform on the military at times of heightened political concern. Thus, for Posen, change occurs from the top down, and is either externally derived or externally driven. Posen considered that military resistance to change resulted from largely rational organisational factors, namely a bureaucratic desire to manage uncertainty and risk.[1] However, later scholars have demonstrated how the cultural attitudes, norms and customs of military organisations – themselves reproduced through organisational processes – can equally serve to impede change.[2] For Posen, the internal agent of external change was the "military maverick"; an individual on the fringe of the military profession, whose radical views accorded with civilian powerbrokers' conceptions of the needed change. Political elites compelled organisational change in the military by elevating these mavericks to senior command, providing them with resources and

[1] Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1984).
[2] Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1997), pp. 39-88.

curtailing opposition.[3] Avant later suggested that the structure of political institutions helped shape this civil-military interaction, either by providing opportunities for the military status quo to resist civilian intrusion by playing off one political institution against another, or conversely by providing little scope for the military to resist civilian intrusions.[4]

In many respects, peacetime reforms enacted by foreign military training missions appear to match Posen's model. Historically, such training missions have been employed by national governments to import foreign military models into their own armed forces. Thus, foreign military trainers act like Posen's "military mavericks"; they are outside to the established military status quo and charged with carrying out externally-mandated change. However, historical examples of such training missions have frequently resulted in less change than seen in Posen's cases, despite sometimes enjoying greater levels of co-operation from host military officers.[5] Arguably, this may be because these external missions lack the coercive ability to enforce change in the way Posen described. Equally though, scholars of peacebuilding have argued that external attempts at institution-building have frequently suffered from a lack of "local ownership" of change, such that reforms become reliant on the presence of external experts, rather than internal mavericks, to persist. This is particularly problematic during SSR, as reform typically aims to address the very behaviour on which local elites' status quo interests rely.[6] Concerns over "local ownership" more broadly form a central tenant of criticism rejecting liberal peacebuilding as an approach to intervention.[7] Indeed, the sustainability of IMATT's Plan 2010

[3] Posen, *op. cit.*
[4] Deborah D. Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1994).
[5] See for example, William F. Sater, 'The Impact of Foreign Advisors on Chile's Armed Forces, 1810-2005', in Donald Stoker (ed.), *Military Advising and Assistance: From Mercenaries to Privatization, 1815-2007* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2008), pp. 26-41; Emily O. Goldman, 'The Spread of Western Models to Ottoman Turkey and Meiji Japan', in Theo Farrell & Terry Terriff, *The Sources of Military Change: Culture, Politics, Technology* (London, Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp. 41-68; Eric R. Rittinger, 'Exporting Professionalism: US Efforts to Reform the Armed Forces in the Dominican Republic and Nicaragua, 1916-1933', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 26:1 (2015), pp. 136-157.
[6] Timothy Edmunds, 'Security Sector Reform', in Thomas C. Bruneau & Florina Cristiana Matei (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2013), pp. 55-6; Robert Egnell & Peter Haldén, 'Laudable, Ahistorical and Overambitious: Security Sector Reform Meets State Formation Theory', *Conflict, Security & Development*, 9:1 (2009), p. 32.
[7] For arguments typical of this school of thought, see Nicolas Lemay-Hébert, 'Statebuilding Without Nation-building? Legitimacy, State Failure and the Limits of the Institutionalist Approach', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 3:1 (2009), pp. 21-45; Augustine S. J. Park, 'Peacebuilding, the Rule of Law and the Problem of Culture: Assimilation, Multiculturalism,

reforms in Sierra Leone has been repeatedly challenged on this basis. A number of international observers have questioned the financial affordability of IMATT-designed reforms for the Sierra Leonean exchequer without continued external aid.[8] Similarly, Albrecht and Jackson have raised concerns over the durability of normative change in the RSLAF after IMATT's withdrawal.[9] In retrospect, a number of senior British officers certainly felt that it was IMATT which kept the RSLAF honest; the implication being that once IMATT left, so might the RSLAF's new-found culture of accountability.[10]

Indeed, Posen's model of externally-directed change has been consistently challenged, even in national contexts. Most notably, Rosen has demonstrated that political intervention into defence reform has frequently occurred after change was already underway, and so had little decisive impact on outcomes. Instead, Rosen found that change came from competition between competing schools of thought within the military, typically led by established and well-respected senior officers. These officers pursued campaigns of bureaucratic warfare against rival visions of how the organisation should operate, with victory resulting from having convinced sufficient numbers of officers of the cause; especially those in critical positions in the institutional hierarchy. The winning school would then be in a position to not only affect its desired reforms, but also to institutionalise them through the military's socialisation and promotional processes.[11] Rosen thus rejected Posen's mechanism of externally-directed reform in favour of an intra-service model of

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Deployment', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 4:4 (2010), pp. 413-32; Ariel I. Ahram, 'Learning to Live with Militias: Toward a Critical Policy on State Frailty', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 5:2 (2011), pp. 175-92; David Roberts, 'Everyday Legitimacy and Postconflict States: Introduction', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 7:1 (2013), pp. 1-10.

[8] Adrian Horn, Funmi Olonisakin & Gordon Peake, 'United Kingdom-led Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone', *Civil Wars*, 8:2 (2006), p. 20; Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007* (Birmingham, GFN-SSR, 2009), p. 6; Ashlee Godwin & Cathy Haenlein, 'Security-Sector Reform in Sierra Leone: The UK Assistance Mission in Transition', *RUSI Journal*, 158:6 (2013), pp. 30-9.

[9] Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, Securing Sierra Leone 1997-2013: *Defence, Diplomacy and Development in Action* (London, Routledge, 2014), p. 16, pp. 56-103, p. 104, pp. 171-2.

[10] Interview with Brigadier (retd.) David Santa-Olalla DSO MC, Commander IMATT 2005, conducted in London on 29 June 2015; Interview with Brigadier (retd.) Iain Cholerton CBE, Commander IMATT 2007, conducted in Herefordshire on 16 July 2015; Interview with Colonel (retd.) Jamie Martin, Commander IMATT 2011-3, conducted in Dorset on 21 July 2015; Interview with Participant A5, a senior British officer who served in Sierra Leone, conducted in Exeter on 14 June 2015; In Interview with Participant A8, a senior British officer who served in Sierra Leone, conducted in Kent on 12 August 2015; Interview with Participant A11, a senior British officer in Sierra Leone in 2004, conducted in London on 24 July 2015.

[11] Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1991).

military change. However, IMATT's approach under Plan 2010 calls into question the mutual exclusivity of these two models, at least in the case of foreign military capacity building. In order to displace the RSLAF's existing neo-patrimonial norms, IMATT developed a generational approach to change reliant on processes of military socialisation, professionalization, and promotion. The impact of generational change has been seen in other military organisations, though largely without external involvement.[12] Though externally-directed and largely implemented from the top-down, Plan 2010 exploited the RSLAF's own internal processes to effect change from the ground-up. Such a blend of external and internal change appears as a counterpoint to concerns over local ownership in liberal peacebuilding and SSR, directly addressing Suhrke's pithy criticism that 'local ownership clearly means "their" ownership of "our" ideas'.[13]

This chapter proceeds in five sections. First, it examines the development of Plan 2010 and the concept of generational change IMATT pursued. Secondly, it examines the development of new organisational processes for recruitment, promotion, and professional education, which IMATT used to create and institutionalise a new organisational culture via this generational model of reform. The third section examines RSLAF resistance to these institutional reforms, exploring the limits of IMATT's influence through the case of RSLAF downsizings and redundancies. The fourth, penultimate section examines the conduct of the 2007 presidential elections as a microcosm of SSR in Sierra Leone, examining the extent of cultural change displayed by the RSLAF. Finally, the chapter concludes that IMATT's approach to promoting normative cultural change in the RSLAF adopted a blend of external and intra-service mechanisms, but IMATT's ability to exercise sufficient control over the institutional processes required to fully harness intra-service change was hampered by the persistence of neo-patrimonial attitudes among RSLAF senior officers, as well as civilian political intransience.

[12] Stephen M. Saideman, 'Canadian Forces in Afghanistan: Minority Government and Generational Change While Under Fire', in Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga & James A. Russell (eds.), *Military Adaptation in Afghanistan* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 219-241; Williamson Murray, 'Does Military Culture matter?', *Orbis*, 43:1 (1999), p. 30.
[13] Astri Suhrke, 'Reconstruction as Modernisation: The "Post-Conflict" Project in Afghanistan', *Third World Quarterly*, 28:7 (2007), p. 1292.

Plan 2010 and Generational Change

The development of Plan 2010 was a direct response to the initial difficulties IMATT experienced in implementing institutional reforms in the post-war RSLAF. As was seen in the previous chapter, much of this reform effort was ad hoc and lacked strategic focus, despite previous SILSEP planning. Consequently, projects like Operation Pebu failed to overcome the ingrained cultural preferences of RSLAF officers, and the force remained both heavily politicised and deeply patrimonial. As Plan 2010 itself stated, 'driven by the security situation, IMATT (SL) has been largely reactive. Greater stability has allowed the development of the IMATT (SL) staff effort. Failure to act will have negative implications for the development of the RSLAF and IMATT (SL)'s credibility'.[14] Staff work on Plan 2010 began in 2003 under Brigadier Adrian Freer, and the document was launched the following year by his successor, Brigadier Simon Porter. Plan 2010 provided a detailed five-year route-map for RSLAF development, which in the word of one IMATT staff officer, 'set the context and…took a more strategic view of what we were trying to do in Sierra Leone'.[15] Plan 2010 envisioned a smaller, more professional RSLAF, firmly under democratic civilian control and able to sustain itself financially through international deployments on peacekeeping operations.[16] Practically, Plan 2010 contained four strands: one promoted effective security sector institutions and structures; a second was focused on ensuring the RSLAF could effectively manage itself; a third aimed to develop 'the structures, logistics base, material and policy framework that underpin the functioning of a disciplined force'; while the final strand sought to equip the RSLAF, materially and conceptually, with sufficient capacity to fulfil its allotted defence missions and tasks.[17] As such, Plan 2010 provided a strategy for cultural and institutional change in the RSLAF; it was a considered attempt to marry the normative end-state IMATT sought with the ways and means available.

Plan 2010's objective was to reform the RSLAF's cultural norms and behaviours in line with Western concepts of democratic civil-military relations.

[14] Quoted in Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, o*p. cit.*, p. 103.
[15] Interview with Participant A16, a senior British officer serving in IMATT in 2003-4, conducted in Somerset on 10 October 2015.
[16] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-4.
[17] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, o*p. cit.*, p. 32.

IMATT officers thus viewed Plan 2010 as the military component of the wider liberal state-building project in Sierra Leone. As one British staff officer serving in IMATT in 2004 observed:

> 'We were simply doing all the little building blocks at the bottom to make the big thing at the top of the pyramid work, because there's no point in reforming that strategic structure if you've got the same rabble of an army underneath. You've actually got to have not only a competent but morally aligned army if this new democratically accountable civilian controlled security structure is to work. So we were trying to provide the hearts and minds to make the overall architecture work.'[18]

Consequently, the development of Plan 2010 mirrored broader programming trends the British approach to SSR in Sierra Leone emerging at the time. In 2004, a comprehensive review of the Sierra Leonean security architecture was begun under the auspices of GOSL's Office of National Security (ONS), and work was also underway to produce a holistic development plan in the form of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, released the following year.[19]

Simultaneously, however, Plan 2010 was limited by the resources available to the RSLAF and the previous funding commitments IMATT had entered into. As one IMATT staff officer noted, Brigadier Freer's 'training plan had to be then converted into a costed equipment plan that was actually viable',[20] and so Plan 2010 became the primary mechanism for ensuring continued funding for RSLAF reform from the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool.[21] The main vehicle for RSLAF expenditure was via the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), but prior to Plan 2010 significant RSLAF requirements remained outside this allocation. In 2003, for example, only the Air and Maritime wings had costed equipment plans, and these were still under development.[22] In 2004, the MOD was allocated Le 16.1 billion (US$5.5 million) less than it had requested, and even then the funds were not always available.[23] GOSL cash-flow was so unreliable, that as a contingency, IMATT was forced to maintain

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[18] Interview with Participant A17, a senior British Army officer in IMATT 2004-5, conducted in London on 26 October 2015.
[19] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, o*p. cit.*, p. 123; Government of Sierra Leone, 'Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (SL-PRSP): A National Programme for Food Security, Job Creation and Good Governance (2005 – 2007)' (Freetown, February 2005), online at https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2005/cr05191.pdf, accessed on 25/05/16; Interview with Mark White, DFID SILSEP programme manager 2005-6, conducted in London on 17 July 2015.
[20] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*
[21] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*; Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, o*p. cit.*
[22] Participant A16, 'IMATT SL Support to SL MOD – initial impressions', unpublished IMATT briefing document (28 March 2003).
[23] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

sufficient cash in its safe to pay the RSLAF.[24] Yet equally, IMATT found itself unable to back-track on expensive programmes like the Air Wing, despite recognising their impracticality. As Colonel Stack argued,

> 'IMATT's credibility was felt to be possibly at risk, if we turned round and said, "Well you know two years ago we said a rotary wing force, and we're buying it with your money? Well actually that was a crap idea, we're now going for a sensible option".'[25]

Consequently, Plan 2010 retained previous commitments like the Air and Maritime Wings despite practical concerns, in order to protect its reputation and ensure a degree of RSLAF buy-in to the vision.[26]

Informed by previous experience of wartime adaptation and attempts at post-war reform, IMATT recognised that for normative transformation to occur, the *way* in which Plan 2010 pursued change would have to explicitly tackle the political and neo-patrimonial culture of the RSLAF officer corps. This was to be achieved through a generational change in the RSLAF's officer corps. IMATT had identified the need to reshape the values of RSLAF senior officers relatively early on. As one senior British officer in IMATT in 2002 recalled,

> 'the generation we were working with in terms of the future leadership of the Sierra Leone armed forces were the middle ranking officers…we were pretty sure we could turn that force into something that was ethically acceptable even through a western lens. Yes it would take time, and it'd take a generation, a generation of officers'.[27]

Brigadier Freer drew similar conclusions the following year. According to one of his staff, he developed 'very strong views about the role of the junior NCO, the role of the junior officers, and he had a fairly jaundiced view towards the older officers – some of whom couldn't even read – and the older soldiers he saw transitioning out.'[28] This emphasis on the role of leadership in changing the behavioural norms of the RSLAF was evident even before the release of Plan 2010. In April 2003, for example, Freer lectured the RSLAF officer corps on the importance of new leadership values, inviting President Kabbah and the civilian

[24] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*
[25] Interview with Colonel (retd.) Philip Stack, IMATT officer serving as the RSLAF Deputy Joint Force Commander in 2004, conducted in Bath on 17 August 2015.
[26] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*
[27] Interview with Participant A14, a retired senior British officer in IMATT in 2002, conducted in Wiltshire on 21 September 2015.
[28] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*

head of the MOD in order to hammer home the point to his military audience.[29] However, Plan 2010 represented the first codification of this approach.[30]

Under Plan 2010, normative change was to be achieved by the careful selection and extensive training of new officers under IMATT supervision, alongside the retraining and mentoring of existing officers. Through technical and civil-military education, IMATT hoped to instil a new, democratically accountable professional military culture in these impressionable and ambitious younger soldiers.[31] To a significant extent, Plan 2010 thus relied on processes of military socialisation to imbue specific norms in a new generation of RSLAF soldiers. This approach mirrored the institutional mechanisms used by Western militaries, including the British Army, to inculcate specifically military identities and norms in their soldiers. For example, both Ben-Yehuda and Kachtan's studies of the IDF concluded that military socialisation processes significantly accounted for soldiers' identities,[32] while Jowell attributed the integrative behaviour of the Rwanda Defence Force soldiers to the *Ingando* re-education scheme.[33] Indeed, the power of professional military socialisation has also been attributed to improvements in military effectiveness. A number of social psychologists have suggested that professional military training enables soldiers to overcome psychological impediments to killing,[34] while King concluded that professionalization ultimately provides the foundation for tactical sophistication and improved performance.[35] Yet, while professional norms can

[29] Interview with Major General (retd.) Adrian Freer OBE, Commander IMATT 2002-3, conducted in London on 29 July 2015; Brigadier Adrian Freer OBE, 'A Command and Leadership Lecture', delivered at the Myohaung Officers' Mess (04 April 2003).
[30] See for example the summary of IMATT's activity and priorities as reviewed in 2003, Jeremy Ginifer with Kaye Oliver, 'Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools: Sierra Leone', Department for International Development Evaluation Report EV 647 (London, March 2004), p. 18.
[31] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*
[32] Nachman Ben-Yehuda, 'The Masada Mythical Narrative and the Israeli Army', in Edna Lomsky-Feder & Eyal Ben-Ari (eds.), *The Military and Militarism in Israeli Society* (Albany, NY, State University of New York Press, 1999), pp. 57-88; Dana Kachtan, 'The Construction of Ethnic Identity in the Military - From the Bottom Up', *Israel Studies*, 17:3 (2012), pp. 150-175.
[33] Marco Jowell, 'Cohesion Through Socialization: Liberation, Tradition and Modernity in the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF)', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 8:2 (2014), pp. 278-9.
[34] Theodore Nadelson, *Trained to Kill: Soldiers at War* (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press, 2005); Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (Boston, MA, Little, Brown & Co, 1996); Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face-to-Face Killing in Twentieth Century Warfare* (London, Granta, 1999). See also, Robert Johnson, 'Killing and Cohesion in Close Combat: Contexts and Concepts from the First World War to the Present', in Anthony King (ed.), *Frontline: Combat and Cohesion in the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford, Oxford Univeristy Press, 2015), pp. 46-69.
[35] Anthony King, *The Combat Soldier: Infantry Tactics and Cohesion in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013); Anthony King, 'The Word of

impel wider organisational changes, a number of academics have highlighted the extent to which deeply held norms can impede institutional and behavioural change.[36] In essence, IMATT's approach in Plan 2010 was to rely on British-run military socialisation and professionalisation to displace the wider cultural norms of neo-patrimonial Sierra Leonean society then present in the senior echelons of the RSLAF's existing officer corps.

IMATT considered that by creating and manipulating new meritocratic processes for recruitment, training, and especially promotion, junior and middle-ranking officers imbued with this new professional ethos would, in time, replace the older generation of politicised senior RSLAF commanders. Once in senior appointments, this new generation would thus be in a position to promulgate IMATT's normative values themselves, sustaining the change indefinitely. As Brigadier Le Grys, Commander IMATT in 2006, explained:

> 'The only way you're going to change that [standard] is to, sort of, get the new Sierra Leone commanders coming through, the younger ones, who understood what was required and were less political. Get them through and get them delivering and get them in command, and then you would see a sustainable upping of standard.'[37]

Brigadier Iain Cholerton, who commanded IMATT in 2007, similarly concluded that,

> 'it's a generational thing to change an armed force, you've got to start with the young officers, you've got to start with the recruits, and you've got to be in it for the long term; you can't do this over five years. It's a generation. It's 25 years to really embed all those cultural changes, the institutional strengths, the building blocks of the NCOs, it's a generational piece.'[38]

Plan 2010, therefore, actively sought to harness the dynamics of intra-service competition that Rosen considered fundamental to military change; especially the centrality of promotional systems to institutionalising reform. However, this mechanism should not be considered a solely top-down process in the way

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Command: Communication and Cohesion in the Military', *Armed Forces & Society*, 32:4 (2006), pp. 493-512.

[36] Ronald R. Krebs, 'One Nation under Arms? Military Participation Policy and the Politics of Identity', *Security Studies*, 14:3 (2005), pp. 535-6; Ronald R. Krebs, 'A School for the Nation? How Military Service Does Not Build Nations, and How It Might', *International Security*, 28:4 (2004), pp. 85-124; Ronald R. Krebs, 'Military Dis-Integration: Canary in the Coal Mine?', in Roy Licklider (ed.), *New Armies from Old: Merging Competing Military Forces after Civil War* (Washington, DC, 2014), pp. 245-56; Kier, *op. cit.*

[37] Interview with Brigadier (retd.) Barry Le Grys MBE, Commander IMATT 2005-6, conducted in London on 24 July 2015.

[38] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*

Rosen described.[39] As with the impact of generational turn-over among senior officers in Canada's adaptation to counter-insurgency in Afghanistan, the crucial attitudinal shifts were to occur at the bottom end of the RSLAF's hierarchy, and only subsequently move vertically from the ground up to the top.[40]

Nonetheless, Plan 2010 remained an externally-imposed exercise. By necessity, Plan 2010 was drafted by IMATT officers, with very little consultation or input from the RSLAF or MOD, and subsequently 'pitched' to DFID to secure sufficient funding.[41] According to Colonel Stack, IMATT officers drafted Plan 2010 because the RSLAF's 'concentration at that time was existence, not development'.[42] As one senior British officer in IMATT in 2004 later recalled,

> 'We, IMATT, wrote it, because…[it] was all such a foreign idea to the leadership at that time. To them, the leadership at that time, the issues were here, right in front of their face. Day to day problems, day to day challenges to be solved'.[43]

Consultations on a final draft of the plan were held with the RSLAF's senior cohort, including the Deputy Minister of Defence, CDS, and some directorate heads. However, this elicited a limited response, in no small part, because of its complexity. As one IMATT staff officer in the MOD recalled:

> 'I do remember my brigadier seeing it. He said, "I don't really understand it, but if you can explain the bits to me that we have got to do, then that's OK". The concept of a ten year plan was not something they'd ever thought of.'

This IMATT officer found that while RSLAF commanders were keen to implement technical aspects they could readily appreciate, they found the strategic nature of Plan 2010 difficult to engage with.[44]

Equally, Plan 2010 had to be externally imposed because senior RSLAF officers proved unwilling to support a generational model of normative change which effectively sought to marginalise them. One senior British officer involved in drafting Plan 2010 later argued that the lack of RSLAF involvement was only ever intended to be temporary:

> '[Plan 2010] was a bit of a false plan really…we wrote the plan, and "sold" it to the leadership, persuaded them to take it on. But actually the real intent was that so soon they could get rid of that plan, because they've seen a plan, and now let's

[39] Rosen, *op. cit.*
[40] Saideman, *op. cit.*
[41] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[42] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[43] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*
[44] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*

> refine it. And as you refine it, you being the RSLAF, it becomes your plan, not one imposed by an external organisation.'[45]

However, senior RSLAF officers declined to engage with aspects of Plan 2010 from the start. For example, the measures of effect in Plan 2010 were assessed by a traffic light system, running from red through amber to green depending on the level of RSLAF progress in a given area. As Plan 2010 was launched, one IMATT officer recalled how the RSLAF CDS announced that in his view, the RSLAF was green in all areas. The IMATT officer concluded that this 'was a seminal moment really, in terms of their view and our view on things'.[46] The implications senior RSLAF officers drew from Plan 2010 – even those initially favoured by IMATT – is evident from the tone of Major General Alfred Nelson-Williams when later describing IMATT's generational model of reform:

> 'IMATT holds the view that with training and the right influences, new officer recruits could become commanders who would match the quality of officers that exists elsewhere in West Africa. These recruits are a bright, ambitious and restless group; it is understandable that IMATT would consider them to be the best vehicle for RSLAF reform…IMATT is optimistic that this group will be the first to command the RSLAF competently without foreign "guidance" or "hand-holding".'[47]

While Plan 2010 helped Nelson-Williams rise from among the senior RSLAF command to become CDS from 2008-10, he himself later fell foul of IMATT's strategy generational of change. Instead, the vision of a fully-equipped RSLAF codified by Plan 2010 subsequently became a source of leverage for the RSLAF in their attempts to pursue IMATT for greater funding – a mantra of Operation Pebu and Puma helicopters, as Albrecht and Jackson characterised it.[48]

Institutionalising Cultural Change

Under Plan 2010, IMATT hoped to use training and education to inculcate professional behaviours in new a generation of RSLAF officers. Practically, IMATT sought to ensure this generation would dominate the RSLAF by creating new institutional systems for meritocratic recruitment and promotion, reinforced by a more formal and objective disciplinary system. The ascendancy of this new

[45] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*
[46] Interview with Participant A21, a British officer in IMATT 2004-5, conducted in Salisbury on 17 November 2015.
[47] Alfred Nelson-Williams, 'Restructuring the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces', in Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson (eds.), S*ecurity Sector Reform in Sierra Leone 1997 - 2007: Views from the Front Line* (Berlin, Lit, 2010), p. 140.
[48] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

cohort of officers, with their Western professional culture, would underpin Western norms of civil-military relations and military effectiveness in the future RSLAF. As such, normative generational change was to be enacted in the RSLAF through the development of Westernised institutional mechanisms for managing training and career progression.

The first recruiting drives under Plan 2010 were conducted in the autumn of 2004, funded jointly by GOSL and DFID. These consisted of four tranches of soldier recruiting and one for officers. Applicants attended a selection process held at Benguema, supervised by IMATT and carried out according to an adapted British Army system based on merit. In the period between 2002 and 2007, 940 new recruits and 210 newly commissioned second lieutenants passed out of training at Benguema.[49] To advertise the new meritocratic recruitment drives, IMATT and RSLAF officers appeared on Sierra Leonean radio, and conducted a series of roadshows across the country.[50] In contrast to previous recruiting attempts, this resulted in remarkable degree of interest, such that IMATT staff found themselves 'deluged with applications'[51] and with 'an embarrassment of riches'.[52] IMATT considered that the appeal of service in the RSLAF was largely a product of the poor economic circumstances prevailing in the country, such that the relatively secure employment, housing and welfare provision the RSLAF offered was extremely attractive.[53] Nonetheless, given the widespread societal distrust of the military prevalent at the end of the Rebel War, the ease with which the RSLAF was able to recruit during the period must also in part reflect the degree of confidence IMATT's presence encouraged. This was probably helped by IMATT attempts to include local communities in RSLAF recruiting, particularly during the early tranches. At one stage, for example, lists of prospective RSLAF recruits were presented to local communities, who were asked to vet the lists and make comment on the character of potential recruits.[54]

[49] Alfred Nelson-Williams, *op.cit.*, p. 148.
[50] Interview with Participant A17, *op.cit.*
[51] Interview with Participant A11, *op.cit.*
[52] Interview with Participant A17, *op.cit.*
[53] Interview with Participant A11, *op.cit.*; Interview with Participant A17, *op.cit.*
[54] Interview with Keith Biddle, Inspector General of Police of the Sierra Leone Police 1999-2004, and retired British Assistant Inspector of Constabulary, conducted in Cheshire on 5 December 2007 by Gordon Peake, as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 15, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/keith-biddle,

IMATT was insistent that RSLAF recruits had to be selected according to far more rigorous standards than had been the case during the Rebel War. New educational standards formed the centrepiece of this policy, and were considered essential for improving civil-military relations. As one IMATT officer responsible for redesigning RSLAF education policies explained, this was a direct response to the perceived failings of the wartime SLA:

> 'Part of the problem with the old Sierra Leone Army being the high rate of illiteracy stemming from frankly unsuitable people recruited during the civil war, and this illiteracy had led to all sorts of very bad behaviour and violations of human rights. So the thought was [that] if we get a new educated army at both the soldier and officer level…we can educate them in civic responsibilities, [and] particularly officers, their wider responsibilities, so therefore the education was very prominent in the recruiting.'[55]

Both officers and soldiers were required to produce education certificates for the standardised West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) at A Level and O Level/GCSE equivalent grades respectively, and IMATT established a relationship with the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) which administered the tests in order to verify certificates.[56]

Recruit selection itself was to be conducted on the basis of meritocratic performance in standardised tests, rather than on tribal or patrimonial characteristics. The single officer recruitment tranche run in 2004, for example, was conducted through what one IMATT officer described as 'an equivalent of the [British] army's Regular Commissions Board'.[57] Potential officers were assessed by a panel of senior brigadiers, chaired by the CDS and the civilian director general of the MOD in person. Candidates were scored on their

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accessed on 25/05/16. This process has evidently continued, and potential recruits during the 2013/14 RSLAF recruitment drive were requested to provide two letters of recommendation from their Paramount Chief, MP, local councillor, a senior government official, or representative of the local authority. Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence, 'Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) Recruitment Drive 2013/14', online at http://www.mod.gov.sl/docs/RSLAF%20Recruitment%202013.pdf, accessed on 25/05/16. While it might be argued that requesting such letters of recommendation introduces a level of subjectivity into recruitment, along with an opportunity for patronage, this requirement is not uncommon even in Western military recruitment processes. Candidates applying for entry to US Military Academies, for example, must be congressionally nominated by a senior politician. See United States Military Academy West Point, 'West Point Admissions', online at http://www.usma.edu/admissions/SitePages/Apply_Nominations.aspx, accessed on 25/05/16.

[55] Interview with Participant A17, *op.cit.*

[56] *Ibid.*; West African Examinations Council, 'The Council's Examinations', online at http://www.waecheadquartersgh.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=section&id=6&Itemid=59, accessed on 25/05/16.

[57] The Regular Commissions Board, since renamed the Army Officer Selection Board, is the three-day assessment centre by which selects potential British Army officers; the RSLAF version was held over the course of a single day.

performance across all aspects of the selection process using a British military boarding system. In this process, every member of the board scores each candidate independently according to their performance against defined standards, and divergent scores between board members are then openly debated. Scores from the board members are then averaged, and the candidates ranked accordingly. Commander IMATT "shadow marked" to ensure RSLAF board members scored applicants against the selection criteria rather than against undisclosed personal preferences. IMATT felt that the RSLAF took the process seriously, and the board's top scoring officer candidate matched Commander IMATT's ranking. That this individual was a woman, despite the patriarchal nature of the RSLAF, was seen as further evidence of IMATT's influence on RSLAF decision making.[58]

Although individual selection was done on merit, IMATT did monitor recruits' ethnic background and province of origin. This was necessary to guard against ethnic stacking, or the equally dangerous *perception* of regional favouritism. Although the need to ethnically and geographically balance the force potentially ran at odds with the concept of meritocratic selection, this issue was assuaged by the sheer volume of potential applicants, such that sufficient recruits from all backgrounds could be found who were able to objectively meet the new entrance standards. However, IMATT recognised a lack of applicants from among the Mende groups in eastern provinces during the initial recruitment tranches, and conducted a further roadshow to ensure new entrants reflected the ethnic and regional demographics of the wider Sierra Leonean population. IMATT attributed this initial imbalance to the residual experience of the Rebel War, the south east having been most fought over and thus bore the brunt of the SLA's indiscipline during the conflict.[59] Given the incumbent SLPP government, a lack of eastern Mende applicants likely also reflected the widespread view that the army's senior leadership remained APC loyalists who would disadvantage Mende recruits' careers in the long term. Indeed, Nelson-Williams later complained that in his view, the first wave of RSLAF restructuring had unfairly privileged SLPP supporters, largely Mende from the east.[60] But despite the potential tension between meritocracy and ethnic balance, the new

[58] Interview with Participant A11, *op.cit.*
[59] Interview with Participant A17, *op.cit.*
[60] Nelson-Williams, *op.cit.*, p. 124.

recruiting process was successful in overturning previous patrimonial mechanisms based on the card system; a result in no small part attributable to IMATT's direct control of the system.

Rigorous recruiting procedures supported a wider programme of RSLAF normative re-education. Even before Plan 2010, IMATT had used education to reinforce the concept of civilian control. In February 2002, for example, IMATT collaborated with the ICRC to run a 'train-the-trainers' course at Benguema, which instructed 55 RSLAF officers in how to deliver IHL training to their soldiers.[61] Education was considered particularly important to establishing democratic control of the RSLAF, because as Brigadier Freer observed, with a 30 per cent illiteracy rate in the RSLAF it was 'easy for the charismatic malcontent to sway opinion'.[62] Under Plan 2010, this was institutionalised through the activities of the Armed Forces Education Centre (AFEC) at Wilberforce Barracks. The AFEC ran courses for both soldiers and officers, administered by RSLAF education officers but supervised by IMATT. Courses were established to provide basic literacy and numeracy for soldiers, and IMATT developed relationships with external bodies in order to improve the civil-military content of RSLAF education. Education materials for AFEC courses focused on civics, and were provided by a local consortium of Sierra Leonean universities and education NGOs.[63] The ICRC was asked to validate the human rights training provided to the RSLAF, and an 80 page booklet was

[61] ICRC, 'Sierra Leone: Promoting International Humanitarian Law', news release 02/07, 14 February 2002, online at https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/57jrmj.htm, accessed on 25/05/16; ICRC Newsletter, Sierra Leone, September 01-February 02, online at https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/newsletter-sl-2002-1.pdf, accessed on 31/07/16.
[62] Freer, 'A Command and Leadership Lecture', *op.cit.*, pp. 1-9. This may have been a veiled reference to the sway ex-Major Johnny Paul Koroma had exercised over factions of the army, who was described by one IMATT officer as a 'very charismatic man…he looked the part…knew about soldiers. Knew about how to get their respect. I could see why people followed him', Interview with Colonel (retd.) Mike Dent CBE, SILSEP and IMATT Adviser to the Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence 1999-2002, conducted in Worcester on 20 November 2015.
[63] Interview with Participant A17, *op.cit.*; Government of Sierra Leone, 'The Education Act, 2004', Supplement to the Sierra Leone Gazette, 135:19 (1 April 2004), online at http://www.sierra-leone.org/Laws/2004-2p.pdf, accessed on 25/05/16; see also Amma Akrofi & Amy Parker, 'An Assessment Project on the "Literacy-on-the Job" Needs of Young Adults in Sierra Leone', in Patriann Smith & Alex Kumi-Yeboah (eds), Handbook of Research on Cross-Cultural Approaches to Language and Literacy Development (Hershey, PA, IGI Global, 2015), pp. 18-9.

subsequently released in July 2006 entitled 'IHL Code of Conduct for the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF)'.[64]

Under Plan 2010, re-education and training formed an essential component of the RSLAF's restructured model of career progression. IMATT established defined career models for RSLAF officers and soldiers, in which promotion became contingent upon completing technical courses, performance in role, and the requisite levels of professional education. To be eligible to promote at each rank, officers and soldiers had first to qualify by variously attending specified tactical leadership courses run at Benguema and Brigade Battle Schools, or specific professional education courses.[65] Historically, the SLA had provided professional military education to its officers by sending them abroad to complete staff and higher command courses on an ad hoc basis. This resulted in the RSLAF's senior officer cohort having variously received professional training from China, Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, the UK and the US, or indeed not at all, depending the availability of funds.[66] Instead, IMATT concentrated on designing short staff courses which could be run in Sierra Leone by IMATT instructors.[67]

Initially, however, IMATT continued to send officers abroad, particularly to the Ghanaian Armed Forces Command and Staff College. In principle, this relationship reinforced accountability in the RSLAF as the Ghanaian Staff College also benefitted from an embedded British Military Advisory Training Team. Stadward, for example, gleefully recalled how one underqualified RSLAF captain corruptly secured a place on the Ghanaian course, only to be immediately sent home by the embedded British instructors after he failed the

[64] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*; ICRC, 'Sierra Leone: ICRC and Ministry of Defence Launch New Tools for Soldiers', news release, 4 August 2006, online at https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/news-release/2009-and-earlier/sierra-leone-news-040806.htm, accessed on 25/05/16.
[65] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A22, a British Army officer serving in IMATT in 2008-9, conducted in Shrewsbury on 24 November 2015; IMATT, 'RSLAF/IMATT Training Policies & Initiatives', unpublished IMATT briefing presentation (22 September 2003); Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, 'Establishment and Development of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF), online at http://www.mod.gov.sl/docs/TheHistoryOfRepublicOfSierraLeoneArmedForces-RSLAF.pdf, accessed on 25/05/16, pp. 15-18.
[66] Nelson-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
[67] IMATT, 'RSLAF/IMATT Training Policies & Initiatives', *op. cit.*

course entrance test.[68] However, there was insufficient capacity at the Ghanaian academy to accommodate the number of RSLAF officers who required training, and equally the RSLAF could ill-afford to lose significant numbers of officers for a year-long course.[69] Moreover, it became apparent that extensive use of overseas courses helped perpetuate patrimonial tendencies in the RSLAF officer corps. Officers attending an overseas course received an additional daily allowance on top of their salary known as 'per diems', intended to cover officers' expenses. Per diems were paid at the UN rate,[70] while those attending courses in Canada, for instance, received an additional subsidy from the Canadian government.[71] These allowances typically exceeded the actual cost of attending the course, and in consequence, overseas courses were an extremely attractive financial prospect for RSLAF officers.[72] The effective sale of course places became a lucrative trade for officers in influential appointments, who were suspected of gerrymandering selection processes in return for a cut of the appointed officer's per diems.[73]

In late October 2003, President Kabbah opened a newly built staff training school for the RSLAF called the Horton Academy.[74] The Horton Academy subsequently ran two six-week long Junior Staff Courses annually, as well as a six-week course for aspiring company commanders, and a commanding officers' course consisting of three four-week modules. These courses prepared officers for promotion by providing them with the necessary command and staff training to operate at that rank. The first Junior Staff Course was planned for November 2003, and up to 150 officers subsequently attended some form of training at the Academy each year.[75] Although modelled on the British Army's officer career structure, Horton Academy staff courses were

[68] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel (retd.) Jeremey Stadward, a senior British officer in IMATT 2001-3, conducted in Wiltshire on 8 September 2015.
[69] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*
[70] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*
[71] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*
[72] Freer, 'A Command and Leadership Lecture', *op. cit.*, p. 5.
[73] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*; Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*
[74] Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, 'Address delivered by His Excellency the President Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah at the Passing-Out Parade to Mark the Commissioning of Direct Entry and Recruits 21 November 2003', archived from the Republic of Sierra Leone State House Online website, online at http://archive.is/BgnNP, accessed 25/09/15.
[75] Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, *Coming Back From the Brink in Sierra Leone: A Memoir* (Accra, EPP Books, 2010), p. 291; IMATT, 'RSLAF/IMATT Training Policies & Initiatives', *op. cit.*, slides 14-17.

tailored significantly to the RSLAF, and civil-military education featured prominently.[76] Indeed, Brigadier Santa-Olalla, Commander IMATT in 2005, described the courses as 'much more about education than training'.[77] IMATT funded lecturers from Forah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, to teach security studies and international relations on the senior courses.[78] In 2003, academics from the University of Bradford similarly ran a seminar in the MOD on 'Peace Education and Human Rights'.[79] The ultimate aim of these courses was to ensure that if 'a soldier said, "What's all this Law of Armed Conflict stuff and why are we having to learn it?" the[ir] officer could then explain the bigger reasons why it was important'.[80]

The design of the Horton Academy itself was intended to promote normative socialisation. It was named after James Africanus Horton, a Sierra Leonean creole who read medicine in the UK in the 1850s and subsequently reached the rank of surgeon-major (equivalent to lieutenant colonel) in the British Army.[81] The name was intended as an inspirational symbol of Sierra Leone's proud martial past, yet the Horton Academy was not established as part of the regular RSLAF defence estate but instead as an adjunct to the IMATT compound at Leicester Square.[82] In part, this was a way of making IMATT money stretch further, as the Horton Academy buildings were designed to double up as accommodation for British reinforcements in an emergency.[83] However, it was also a clear attempt to remove those officers receiving staff training from the wider RSLAF environment, in order to make them more susceptible to IMATT's professionalising influence. As Lieutenant Colonel

[76] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[77] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*
[78] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*
[79] Kabbah, 'Address delivered by His Excellency', *op. cit.*
[80] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*
[81] Christopher Fyfe, 'Horton, (James) Africanus Beale', in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/61022, accessed on 25/05/16.
[82] Kabbah, *Coming Back From the Brink*, *op. cit.*, p. 291; Interview with Major General Adrian Freer, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*
[83] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*; Stadward also noted that the IMATT tennis courts were big enough to land a Chinook, the British Army's main support helicopter of the day. During the period that the Horton Academy was being developed, the British Army deployed the 2nd Battalion, Royal Gurkha Rifles along with supporting troops to Sierra Leone, to provide additional force protection to IMATT and a visible security presence in the country during a period of increased border incursions from Liberia, and tensions over Chief Sam Hinga Norman's indictment by the Special Court for Sierra Leone. See Imperial War Museum Film Archives BFA 2296 L1, 'Operation Keeling, Sierra Leone, February-March 2003 (Tape 14)', Interview with Lieutenant-Colonel Ian Thomas, Commanding Officer, 2nd Battalion, The Royal Gurkha Rifles; International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: The State of Security and Governance', Africa Report No. 67 (Freetown/Brussels, 2 September 2003), pp. 2-6.

Stadward commented, the location of the Horton Academy was deliberately intended to 'get the students away from the RSLAF into the IMATT, [and] look after them there…where you can start to influence the young'.[84] Both the content of courses and their delivery, therefore, reinforced IMATT's approach to RSLAF cultural change. As one IMATT officer remarked, the plan was 'to work very much on the middle and junior officers to get them into the new ethos, which is why we had all these courses in human rights, civic education, so that even if they were approached with "Let's stage a coup boys", they would say "No sir, we don't do this anymore…".'[85]

The Horton Academy did not totally replace overseas courses, and higher command and staff training was still provided by overseas academies. However, performance at the Horton Academy was used as a mechanism for identifying those suitable to attend overseas courses.[86] IMATT officers working on Plan 2010 thus envisioned a more meritocratic process of selecting officers to attend staff courses overseas, based on a transparent application and boarding process.[87] However, the Horton Academy remained the primary mechanism for both the democratic re-education of RSLAF officers, and their professional development. As Brigadier Santa-Olalla explained, the Horton Academy 'was where we did all our training in terms of trying to get them to understand, particularly the younger officers.'[88] IMATT recognised that the establishment of in-house staff training would cause some resentment among RSLAF officers, who had come to view overseas training opportunities as somewhat of a cash cow, and so initially planned to provide students receiving in-country staff training with a small special allowance in compensation.[89] However, this attitude was slow to erode. In 2007, Brigadier Cholerton still observed a degree of RSLAF resistance to attending Sierra Leonean staff training over foreign courses.[90]

IMATT recognised that professional education would have little lasting effect on the norms of the RSLAF unless promotions themselves were carried

[84] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*
[85] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*
[86] IMATT, 'RSLAF/IMATT Training Policies & Initiatives', *op. cit.*, slide 16.
[87] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*
[88] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*
[89] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*
[90] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*

out according to the same set of values. GOSL had made a public commitment to this in the 2003 Defence White Paper, which promised to 'ensure that recruitment and advancement within the RSLAF is based on merit…In this way, political, tribal or religious affiliations will not be the determinate of promotion'.[91] The first rounds of officer promotions were conducted prior to the release of Plan 2010 using a version of the British military boarding process, and subsequent promotions were to be conducted using the same system.[92] For each round of promotions, boards of assessing officers were assembled from senior commanders across the force, to guard against any accusations of bias. This system was not infallible, however, and one IMATT officer acknowledged that it was hard for IMATT to be sure that those officers selected to sit on the board did not all come from the same ethnic background.[93] In compensation, boards were typically observed by senior IMATT officers, and in a measure of the importance IMATT attached to the new promotional processes, successive Commanders IMATT regularly shadow-marked on promotions boards.[94]

Selection for promotion was made based on officers' annual reports and personnel records, against defined standards of performance and potential.[95] This was problematic in of itself, as the RSLAF's record-keeping during the war had been generally poor. The RSLAF Armed Forces Personnel Centre (AFPC) had to reconstruct personnel files by piecing together available information, or create new files from scratch.[96] In order to prevent collusion between board members, IMATT attempted to limit access to personnel files prior to a board sitting.[97] This proved similarly challenging, in part because of a shortage of trained RSLAF clerks, such that it was 'very obvious when you pick up a personnel file sometimes that something's been taken out and something substituted. That happened all the time, and it was really frustrating.'[98] Although

[91] Government of Sierra Leone, 'Defence White Paper: Informing the People' (Freetown, 2003), para 1018.
[92] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*; Ginifer with Oliver, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
[93] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A21, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*;
[94] Interview with Participant A18, a British officer serving with IMATT, 2010-13, conducted in Hampshire on 27 October 2015; Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A21, *op. cit.*
[95] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A21, *op. cit.*
[96] Interview with Major General Adrian Freer, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*
[97] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*
[98] Interview with Participant A21, *op. cit.*

ostensibly meritocratic, it took some time for IMATT to develop Sierra Leonean confidence in the boarding system. IMATT staff officers from the Sierra Leonean MOD conducted visits to RSLAF units in 2004 to train commanders in how to write annual reports on their subordinates.[99] Lists of those officers selected for promotion were traditionally published in the national press, providing an additional measure of transparency. One IMATT officer subsequently recalled the Deputy Defence Minister's apprehension at publishing a list of promoted officers which was clearly not ethnically representative; his concerns were only allayed after IMATT demonstrated that its staff had supervised the promotions process and the results were meritocratic.[100] Equally, not all officer promotions were boarded in this fashion. Senior command appointments, including on occasion commanding officer appointments, either remained un-boarded or were subject to additional political considerations, as the influence these posts conferred typically drew the Deputy Defence Minister and the President into appointments.[101] However, the majority of junior and middling officer promotions were to be boarded; precisely the promotions which directly affected the cohort of officers IMATT was most heavily invested in.[102]

IMATT also attempted to reintroduce a military legal system to underpin RSLAF discipline. Although current RSLAF documents reference a 2001 edition of the RSLAF's Manual of Military Law,[103] it is clear that military legal concepts were not well established prior to Plan 2010. For example, Stadward recalled a female junior RSLAF officer asking the IMATT legal adviser during a seminar if it was legal for her superiors to order her to sleep with them. When the IMATT officer replied that this was not, a male RSLAF officer apparently retorted, 'You know your duty'.[104] Brigadier Freer similarly remarked that discipline in the RSLAF 'vacillated between completely ineffectual and overly zealous'.[105] IMATT assisted with the establishment of a court martial centre at the Joint Forces Command in Cockerill Barracks, and initially looked to the civilian legal system

[99] Interview with Participant A21, *op. cit.*
[100] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*
[101] Interview with Participant A14, *op. cit.*; Interview with Major General Adrian Freer, *op. cit.*; Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*
[102] Interview with Participant A21, *op. cit.*
[103] RSLAF, 'Establishment and Development', *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[104] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*
[105] Interview with Major General Adrian Freer, *op. cit.*

to support the re-establishment of military justice until RSLAF military lawyers could be trained.[106] The subsequent system was modelled on the British Army's structure, and established the civilian Supreme Court as the military court of appeal.[107] Despite a British Army Legal Corps adviser, however, IMATT struggled to re-introduce a formal military legal process into the RSLAF during 2004.[108] As Colonel Stack recalled, 'We thought it was a bit of domestic housekeeping; [in fact] this was a major issue'. [109] This was largely due to the legacy of previous court martials, which had been highly politicised. By 2007, IMATT officers still described RSLAF discipline as a 'martinet approach', but noted that indiscipline in the RSLAF was no longer a major issue – in part because the rice ration was so vital for the welfare of soldiers' dependants that it served as a major disincentive to bad behaviour.[110]

Professionalise or Retire: The Politics of Generational Replacement

IMATT's ability to implement these new institutional systems was significantly reliant on the political support it enjoyed from President Kabbah. In addition to leading the training team, Commander IMATT also served as Military Adviser to the President, providing direct access to the highest political levels of GOSL. In 2003, for example, Brigadier Freer had a weekly audience with President Kabbah,[111] while in 2005, Brigadier Santa-Olalla had a weekly meeting with the President alone, and another on a less frequent basis accompanied by the British High Commissioner.[112] Commander IMATT's direct access to the President gave IMATT an extraordinary degree of influence over RSLAF reform, as one senior officer serving during Brigadier Porter's tenure as Commander IMATT explained:

> 'there were systems and structures in place [in the RSLAF] we perhaps never even knew about. What we did have, ultimately, is the ear of the president. So in that respect, you could argue we had incredible executive control about what was happening. If something was happening that we did not like, the Chief of Defence Force knew we would take him to the President and we would say, "President you

[106] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*; Alfred Nelson-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 139. The reliance on Sierra Leonean civilian legal professionals may not have been wholly useful, as at least one IMATT officer recalled experiencing significant corruption among some members of the civilian judiciary. Interview with Participant A21, *op. cit.*
[107] RSLAF, 'Establishment and Development', *op. cit.*, p. 15.
[108] Ginifer with Oliver, *op. cit.*, p. 18; Interview with Participant A21, *op. cit.*
[109] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit*
[110] Interview with Participant A22, *op. cit*; Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[111] Interview with Major General Adrian Freer, *op. cit.*
[112] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*

> need to look at this". That was an access and position that the Commander of IMATT had, and could use, and people knew that…So it was a guiding hand, it was an arm round the shoulder; but there was an element of steel there.'[113]

Colonel Stack, who also served in IMATT in 2004, characterised this relationship as akin to patronage, with IMATT becoming the most powerful "big man" in the RSLAF as a result:

> 'IMATT's patronage came from the President, Kabbah. He was the one who called the Brits in, effectively. And anyone in the military, if there was resentment of IMATT, or "we don't like what IMATT are doing", they knew that basically IMATT had the ear of the President…That was a very powerful tool, and it was a very clear demonstration of where the patronage was coming from, and it was a lever, I suppose, over the military.'[114]

IMATT's political "patronage" allowed it to drive through reforms in the face of RSLAF resistance, even after IMATT accelerated its transition from executive to advisory roles during 2003.[115]

However, IMATT did not universally rely on political patronage to achieve its aims. Brigadier Santa-Olalla found that despite the reduced number of executive posts held by IMATT officers, his control over British funds – on which the routine running on the RSLAF relied – meant he retained significant coercive influence independent of the President.[116] Lieutenant Colonel Harold Simpson, who served as the effective head of the Training, Education and Recruiting Directorate in the MOD during 2004, likened this relationship between the RSLAF and IMATT as akin to 'Moral Suasion':

> 'British military and civilian advisors exercised a combination of moral, intellectual and pragmatic influence over their Sierra Leonean counterparts often making the continued funding of projects conditional on the Sierra Leoneans doing things in the British way and according to the British rule-book.'[117]

Consequently, IMATT appears to epitomise Posen's "military maverick"; implementing military change in an inertia-bound RSLAF at the behest of civilian elites. As the Sierra Leonean civil servant Emmanuel Coker concluded, 'the reform that was going on in [the] MoD was dictated by the British – the entire reform process was. The government at the time wanted SSR, and the

[113] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*
[114] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[115] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*
[116] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*
[117] Lieutenant Colonel Harold Simpson MBE, 'UK Sponsored Stabilisation and Reform in Sierra Leone 2002-2013: A Unique Case or a Template for Future Intervention(s)?', Sandhurst Occasional Papers No. 19 (Camberley, 2014), p. 10.

British were willing to do it'.[118] However, although IMATT was ultimately beholden to the presidency in the face of concerted RSLAF resistance, it was not totally reliant on (or compromised by) Sierra Leonean political patronage. IMATT's technical expertise and independent resources provided it with alternate sources of leverage, over both the RSLAF and, to a certain extent, the President.

The existence of parallel lines of communication and influence open to IMATT caused some discomfort among elements of the RSLAF; not least because Commander IMATT frequently enjoyed better access to the President than the RSLAF CDS. As Mark White observed, the access Commander IMATT enjoyed 'did lead to some quite difficult relationships with the Chief of Defence Staff and the Deputy Minister of Defence, both of whom often had the impression that what the UK might be saying in a public forum…and then what might be being said to the President separately, was different.'[119] Similarly, it also provoked resentment from middle ranking RSLAF officers, who did not enjoy the same privileges as IMATT staff. In 2004, for example, a senior IMATT officer newly arrived in the MOD found that relations with his RSLAF opposite numbers were terse, owing to the fact that his predecessors had regularly attended Defence Council meetings which were the preserve of RSLAF officers two ranks their senior.[120]

However, IMATT's generational approach to normative change, itself facilitated by this degree of political leverage, arguably created more profound tensions within the RSLAF officer corps. Many junior and middle ranking RSLAF officers had little respect for their seniors, largely because they felt these officers had been discredited by the SLA's poor performance during the war.[121] IMATT's model of generational reform actively exploited this perception, something senior RSLAF officers were acutely aware of. Outwardly, many senior RSLAF officers were supportive of IMATT's promotional reforms. Nelson-Williams, for example, wrote in 2010 that the RSLAF 'must stop promoting and rewarding people according to time served, and start demanding performance.

[118] Albrecht & Jackson, Defence, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
[119] Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.*
[120] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*
[121] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*

All good militaries separate the wheat from the chaff, and so must we.'[122] Yet, at the same time, he clearly resented IMATT's attempts to marginalise his generation of senior officers:

> 'IMATT personnel were tempted to turn to these [junior] officers as the best chance of consolidating reform efforts to wash away the stains left by their predecessors, believing the new officers had the flexibility, open-mindedness and idealism of young officers everywhere. However, these new officers viewed senior officers with contempt, as they mistakenly believed their only reason for joining the army was to rid it of the legacy of such officers.'[123]

IMATT's generational approach thus created antagonisms between senior commanders and junior officers, and between those officers perceived by IMATT as competent and accountable and those who were not.

This rift was epitomised by the derogatory slang phrase 'friend of IMATT', which was typically used by former SLA officers to delegitimise RSLAF officers they perceived as favoured by IMATT. The term 'friend of IMATT' was heard by IMATT officers as late as 2009,[124] and was frequently aimed at those RSLAF officers who had completed overseas staff courses and who 'spoke to IMATT in IMATT language' – i.e. IMATT's new generation.[125] The term was intended to be both pejorative and threatening, effectively accusing RSLAF officers of 'becoming a white man's friend'. Importantly, IMATT officers felt the term was most associated with the cohort of officers serving at lieutenant colonel level when Plan 2010 was released; a peer group split between officers leaning towards IMATT's new school of thought and the SLA's "old guard".[126] The term reflected a wider trend in Sierra Leonean society, described by President Kabbah as the 'pull him down' or 'phd' syndrome, through which 'good intentions are often besmeared'.[127] Colonel Stack, who served in IMATT in 2004, certainly recognised that some RSLAF officers were 'out to get' so-called 'friends of IMATT', such that being favoured by the British 'was not necessarily a good thing in the long term'.[128]

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[122] Nelson-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
[123] *Ibid.*, p. 128.
[124] Interview with Participant A24, a retired British officer in IMATT 2007-9, conducted in Exeter on 26 November 2015.
[125] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[126] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*
[127] Kabbah, *Coming Back From the Brink*, *op. cit.*, p. 291.
[128] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*

In some respects, however, this rift was eminently useful for IMATT's chosen model of reform. As a senior IMATT officer in 2002 observed, IMATT felt that 'the senior officers were never going to change, fundamentally. We could work with them, we could do our best with them, but that was a generation that had already been lost'. Given the record of human right abuses condoned by the SLA during the Rebel War, the same officer admitted he found it 'morally uncomfortable working with some of these officers'.[129] In 2004, IMATT recruited a new cohort of junior officers to command platoons specifically to counteract the influence of the wartime generation of senior NCOs on newly recruited soldiers.[130] Indeed, as one senior IMATT officer remarked of his experiences in 2008, 'effectively you were just having to manage the older generation; trying to prevent them from creating more chaos, more institutional chaos than was absolutely necessary.'[131] Consequently, IMATT attempted to act as an "air gap", insulating 'friends of IMATT' from the "old guard". Here, the generational tensions between "new" and "old" RSLAF officers suited IMATT's purposes.

IMATT did attempt to provide some retraining to senior commanders alongside the younger generation. British officers recognised that where senior RSLAF officers were so under-trained they could not fully understand the functions their better-trained juniors were performing, they would feel understandably threatened and attempt to sabotage IMATT efforts. Consequently, IMATT ran a series of "catch-up" courses at the Horton Academy.[132] These did not always purport to be training courses, but were instead billed as familiarisation programmes to raise awareness of IMATT's training regime among senior commanders. Participants nonetheless conducted the same training exercises run on the Junior Staff Course; instructors simply couched them as an opportunity to observe and comment on the sort of training IMATT was providing on the RSLAF's behalf.[133] Nonetheless, the tensions across the RSLAF chain of command served to highlight the highly political and somewhat contested nature of cultural change. While Rosen argued that intra-

[129] Interview with Participant A14, *op. cit.*
[130] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*
[131] Interview with Participant A19, a senior British officer in IMATT 2008-11, conducted by Skype on 20 October 2015.
[132] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*
[133] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*

service rivalry provided a vehicle for military reform unrelated to external political intervention, in the RSLAF this intra-service rivalry was not only a product of IMATT's politically-sponsored intervention, it was also an active agent of change.

Conflict between IMATT and the RSLAF's senior cohort was most pronounced in the area of RSLAF downsizing and redundancies. Here, the contested nature of reform serves to demonstrate the extent to which change was externally-led, and hence reliant on garnering either RSLAF or political support to endure. Reducing the size of the RSLAF was seen as an essential requirement to make the RSLAF financially affordable and therefore sustainable, as well as a means of providing 'financial headroom' to pay for improvements in RSLAF training, infrastructure and equipment.[134] Downsizing would also reinforce IMATT's career model for the RSLAF, helping to reshape the RSLAF's rank structure. In 2003, the *average* age of RSLAF private soldiers was just over 30 years, while the average age of lance corporals was just over 35, and the average age of corporals 38. One lance corporal was still serving at the ripe age of 67![135] The age demographics of junior officers were similar. While the average age for subalterns was 32,[136] 12 per cent of RSLAF army lieutenants were over 40. Consequently, IMATT wished to introduce manning control points to rebalance the age demographics of the RSLAF in line with its new rank and career structure. These would compulsorily retire privates at the age of 30, lance corporals at 35, and corporals at 40.[137]

The RSLAF resisted redundancies, largely for patrimonial reasons. Downsizing would reduce commanders' status and influence, and thus their power as "big men".[138] Downsizing was an understandably unpopular prospect for junior ranks, who generally relied on their military salaries and allowances to support large extended families (by some estimates, the RSLAF 'welfare state'

[134] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, p. 108; Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*; Alfred Nelson-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
[135] IMATT, 'Why Restructuring', unpublished IMATT briefing presentation (2003), slides 6-8.
[136] Subalterns is defined here as second lieutenants and lieutenants, including naval and air equivalents.
[137] Data extracted from IMATT, 'Why Restructuring', *op. cit.*, slides 6-8. It should be noted that the graphs presented by this briefing document do not match the underlying data contained within it, which I have used to calculate average ages.
[138] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*; Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*; Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.,* pp. 36-7.

saw each soldier support around 10 dependents).[139] Both IMATT and the RSLAF had periodically sought to bypass this latter issue by transferring redundant military personnel into the SLP, which was perceived to be just as understrength as the RSLAF was bloated. However, such a policy was keenly resisted by the SLP and international police advisers, concerned that the influx of large numbers of disgruntled former soldiers into the police without proper selection, vetting or training would effectively militarise the constabulary and undermine already brittle public confidence.[140]

In part, IMATT accepted the political difficulties of making redundancies in a harsh economic climate – particularly given that the soldiers most likely to face redundancy were those with the lowest educational standards.[141] As Brigadier Le Grys later observed, 'there were significant concerns that putting ex-combatants on the streets was too dangerous'.[142] Equally, one IMATT officer confessed that at the end of the Rebel War, 'The last thing we wanted to do at that stage was downsizing. We needed the troops'.[143] In 2002, the Defence Council had approved a reduction in total RSLAF strength from 15,500 to 10,500 personnel. Nonetheless, the 2003 MTEF submission provided for 14,367 personnel,[144] and defence planning assumptions that year expected a relatively gradual reduction of the force, only reaching 10,500 by January 2007.[145] Nevertheless, Plan 2010 envisaged a smaller, leaner RSLAF of around 8,500 all ranks.[146] The first tranche of redundancies in January 2004 was

[139] Interview with Participant A22, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A18, *op. cit.*; Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*; Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone, op. cit.*, pp. 36-7, p. 81.
[140] Interview with Anthony Howlett-Bolton, Safety and Security Adviser and Justice Sector Development Manager in Sierra Leone, conducted in London on 12 December 2007 by Daniel Scher as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 12, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/anthony-howlett-bolton, accessed on 04/08/16; Interview with Keith Biddle, Inspector General of Police of the Sierra Leone Police 1999-2004, and retired British Assistant Inspector of Constabulary, conducted in Cheshire on 9 July 2015.
[141] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*; this dynamic was described by one Sierra Leonean civil servant as one of 'Matching [the] social realities of mass unemployment with political exigency.' Al-Hassan Kharamoh Kondeh, 'Formulating Sierra Leone's Defence White Paper', in Albrecht & Jackson (eds), *Views from the Front Line*, *op. cit.*, p. 150.
[142] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
[143] Interview with Participant A14, *op. cit.*
[144] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, p. 108.
[145] Freer, 'A Command and Leadership Lecture', *op. cit.*, p. 3.
[146] For example, *ibid.*, p. 13; Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, p. 156; Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone, op. cit.*, p. 79.

carried out tentatively, largely composed of voluntary redundancies, medically unfit personnel, and the discharge of soldiers already absent without leave.[147]

However, subsequent redundancies were used by IMATT to reinforce its generational approach to normative change in the RSLAF, and a further 1,000 redundancies in 2005 proved to be far more controversial.[148] In line with IMATT's new career model for the RSLAF, a significant proportion of these redundancies were compulsory, with individuals selected based on poor discipline records, non-recommendations for promotion in annual reports, low medical and educational status, and age.[149] Although retraining and a financial resettlement package were provided – ultimately funded by DFID – IMATT planned to enforce compulsory redundancies with a stick as well as a carrot;[150] something made more necessary due to the extreme reticence RSLAF officers exhibited when asked to make decisions about redundancies.[151] IMATT briefing documents show that soldiers warned off for compulsory redundancy who refused to work their year-long notice could be tried by court martial and dismissed from service without a redundancy package, *pour encourager les autres*.[152]

Although Nelson-Williams later claimed that downsizing in 2005 did not affect officers, in fact, IMATT pursued a highly-selective compulsory redundancy programme for RSLAF officers as well. This was designed to further IMATT's normative agenda.[153] During Brigadier Santa-Olalla's tenure as Commander IMATT, this ultimately resulted in the effective dismissal of around 70 officers above the rank of major. The selection of these officers was even more targeted than with the soldier tranches; so much so that one senior IMATT officer later described the retirements as akin to 'the night of the long knives'.[154] Compulsory redundancies were pursued by IMATT in line with its wider policy of

[147] IMATT, 'Why Restructuring', *op. cit.*, slide 2; '1,000 Soldiers to be Retired this Year', IRIN News, 14 August 2003, online at http://www.irinnews.org/report/45491/sierra-leone-1000-soldiers-be-retired-year, accessed on 27/05/16.
[148] Alfred Nelson-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
[149] IMATT, 'Why Restructuring', *op. cit.*, slide 16.
[150] Soldiers with more than ten years' service would receive a pension, those with less were eligible for resettlement training and a reduced financial package. Alfred Nelson-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 129; Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*
[151] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*
[152] IMATT, 'Why Restructuring', *op. cit.*, slides 10-13.
[153] Alfred Nelson-Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
[154] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*

insulating junior officers from the worst habits of the older generation, and making space for younger officers to promote. Brigadier Santa-Olalla stated that these redundancies were 'highly targeted at senior officers', and driven by IMATT's:

> 'wish to remove the corrupt element of the hierarchy. These were the ones we hadn't been able to educate. It was the younger ones down below who understood what we were trying to achieve, they wanted to go where we were pointing them, but to some degree they were held back by the hierarchy'.[155]

The targeted nature of officer redundancies was characteristic of the highly choreographed restructuring of senior RSLAF command appointments in which IMATT engaged. This started as early as late 2002, and was continued by successive British commanders and their staffs at least as late as 2013.[156] Known as 'succession planning', IMATT maintained spreadsheets tracking the progression of senior RSLAF officers to identify preferred candidates for key RSLAF command appointments. Although such planning is standard practice in many Western armies, IMATT used its political influence over senior appointments to defend its chosen mechanism of normative change; both by trying to ensure officers from IMATT's new generation were advanced, and to limit the influence of officers IMATT viewed as pernicious. By 2008, the only routine meetings held between Commander IMATT and the Defence Minister at which RSLAF officers were not present involved succession planning.[157]

This dynamic was most dramatically evident in the removal of the RSLAF CDS at IMATT's behest in 2003, as Plan 2010 was being drawn up. Although initially favoured, by 2003 IMATT perceived Major General Tom Carew as an obstacle to its developing reform agenda. General Carew had been initially appointed CDS following the unexpected death of the previous Nigerian incumbent, Brigadier Maxwell Khobe. Carew enjoyed a reputation as a fierce wartime leader, though the unexpected circumstances surrounding his appointment may have rendered him initially reliant on IMATT advice.[158] These factors clearly suited the British during the immediate wartime intervention. However, as the post-war reforms of the RSLAF began to gather pace, British

[155] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*
[156] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*; Interview with Major General Adrian Freer, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A18, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[157] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[158] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*; Interview with Major General (retd.) Jerry Thomas CB DSO, JTFHQ and Colonel, General Staff of the SLAF during Operation Palliser, conducted in Exeter on 13 January 15.

officers increasingly felt General Carew was an obstacle to reform, and lacked some of the personal qualities they wished to see in a Sierra Leonean military figurehead.[159] For example, IMATT became convinced that General Carew was involved in various patrimonial practices, including using RSLAF resources to build a personal residence on the outskirts of Freetown.[160]

In 2003, rumours circulated that General Carew was using his position to sleep with his subordinates' wives and daughters, either in return for favours or under threat of punishment. One IMATT officer working in the MOD recalled that, 'I often saw young women being taken down to his office, not looking very happy, and coming back not looking very happy…With their parents, daughter, coming to meet the CDS.'[161] Another senior IMATT officer remarked that, 'Carew was a serial shagger. I mean, I lost all respect for him when he used to drag officers up to his office and if he fancied their wives he would have their wives'.[162] Brigadier Freer, Commander IMATT at the time, later stated that 'once you realise that's going on, you realise that this isn't someone who could possibly remain as the head'. After drawing up succession plans, Freer approached President Kabbah and persuaded him to replace Carew.[163] President Kabbah publically announced General Carew's retirement, and his virtually immediate replacement by Brigadier Sam M'Boma, at an RSLAF commissioning parade in November 2003.[164] The allegations about Carew's conduct were never proven, but whether they were true or not, they provided sufficient scope for IMATT to have Carew replaced. The incident demonstrated both IMATT's influence in the RSLAF's internal affairs, but also its commitment to the generational model of reform later codified in Plan 2010.

The relationship between Carew and Alfred Nelson-Williams in particular was emblematic of the deeply political and viscerally personal divisions among senior RSLAF officers, which IMATT hoped Plan 2010 would eliminate. Following the 1997 coup, Alfred Nelson-Williams, then a colonel, continued to

[159] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*; Interview with Major General Adrian Freer, *op. cit.*
[160] Interview with Participant A13, a senior British officer in IMATT; Interview with Participant A14, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*; interview with Major General Adrian Freer, *op. cit.*
[161] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*
[162] Interview with Participant A3, a senior British officer in IMATT.
[163] Interview with Major General Adrian Freer, *op. cit.*
[164] Kabbah, 'Address delivered by His Excellency', *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*

serve under the new AFRC/RUF junta. In contrast, Tom Carew, also then a colonel, was arrested along with a number of other pro-SLPP officers and accused of attempting to orchestrate a counter-coup, only narrowly surviving with his life.[165] The following year, after the AFRC/RUF junta had been evicted from Freetown, Kabbah's returning government court-martialled 34 soldiers for their association with the AFRC – including Nelson-Williams – and 24 were publically shot a few days later on the outskirts of Freetown.[166] Tom Carew chaired the court martial,[167] and not only sentenced Nelson-Williams to death, but in a move widely condemned by the international community also denied the condemned soldiers right of appeal.[168] Nelson-Williams was spared by the personal intervention of President Kabbah, who commuted his sentence to life imprisonment,[169] and both subsequently served under the British during Palliser.[170] Carew's role in this court martial may have contributed to his

[165] Amnesty International, 'Sierra Leone: A Month After the Military Coup, Amnesty International Again Calls for Human Rights to be Respected', News Service 111/97, Index AFR 51/04/97, 25 June 1997, online at https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/156000/afr510041997en.pdf, accessed on 27/05/16; Lansana Gberie, *A Dirty War in West Africa: The RUF and the Destruction of Sierra Leone* (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 2005), p. 110; 'People associated with President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah's government', *Sierra Herald* online archive, 11:7 (n.d.), online at http://www.sierraherald.com/afrc-arrests.htm, accessed on 27/05/16; Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A15, a British Army officer who served with IMATT in 2000-1, conducted in Salisbury on 1 October 2015.

[166] 'Twenty-Four Soldiers Executed', *BBC News*, 19 October 1998, online at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/196711.stm, accessed on 27/05/16; '24 Linked to Coup Executed in Sierra Leone', *New York Times*, 20 October 1998, online at http://www.nytimes.com/1998/10/20/world/24-linked-to-coup-executed-in-sierra-leone.html, accessed on 27/05/16 ; Sierra Leone Web online news archive, October 1998, online at http://www.sierra-leone.org/Archives/slnews1098.html, accessed on 27/05/16.

[167] Lansana Fofana, 'Court Martial of Junta Members Begins', I*nter Press Service News Agency*, 24 July 1998, online at http://www.ipsnews.net/1998/07/politics-sierra-leone-court-martial-of-junta-members-begins/, accessed on 27/05/16; David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (Oxford, James Currey, 2005), p. 286.

[168] Godfrey Mwakikagile, *The Modern African State: Quest for Transformation* (Huntington, NY, Nova, 2001), pp. 63-6; Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Appendix 2, Part 3: Submissions, online at http://www.sierraleonetrc.org/index.php/appendices/item/appendix-2-part-3, accessed on 27/05/16; Sierra Leone Web online news archive, October 1998, *op. cit.*; International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: Time for a New Military and Political Strategy', Africa Report No. 28 (Freetown/London/Brussels, 11 April 2001), p. 5. Carew also insisted the defendants remain in handcuffs throughout the trial proceedings, see Sierra Leone Web online news archive, July 1998, online at http://www.sierra-leone.org/Archives/slnews0798.html, accessed on 27/05/16.

[169] Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Appendix 2, Part 3, *op. cit.*; Sierra Leone Web online news archive, October 1998, *op. cit.* Nelson-Williams later wrote that in his view, the worst excesses of this trail were curbed by the British; however he also acknowledged that the right of appeal for courts-martial was in fact suspended during the APC regime, and so his denial of appeal except by intervention of the President is in fact in keeping with court martial processes in place at least since the 1970s. Nelson-Williams, *op. cit.,* p. 123, p. 139.

[170] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*

selection as CDS to replace Nigerian Maxwell Khobe,[171] but was it was also cited by Brigadier Freer as a contributory reason why Carew could not remain as CDS.[172] After Nelson-Williams was brought back into the army, he served as Assistant CDS for Operations and Plans under Carew.[173] IMATT officers working in the MOD subsequently found that the two officers refused to talk to each other, and instead asked IMATT staff to act as go-betweens, further diluting the already weak RSLAF chain of command.[174]

In 2005, GOSL initiated a root-and-branch review of the MOD and RSLAF known as the Core Review, partly precipitated by the impact of downsizing.[175] Heavily influenced by IMATT, the Core Review eventually confirmed the need to draw down the RSLAF in line with Plan 2010's 8,500 target.[176] Despite obfuscation of the agenda by use of terms such as 'rightsizing' and 'rebalancing', IMATT proved unable to enforce further redundancies in 2006, highlighting IMATT's reliance on political support to enact controversial reforms.[177] By 2006, President Kabbah was focused on domestic policies and had little time for defence issues. Moreover, both political parties had one eye on the upcoming elections, and any large-scale redundancies would undoubtedly prove politically unpopular. Consequently, the mid-year 2006 Defence Council meeting was not held, drawing out the issue.[178]

Instead, IMATT attempted to pursue downsizing by softening the blow to the RSLAF. IMATT argued that downsizing should be accompanied by reinvestment in modern equipment, which would act as 'force multipliers' to offset the reduction in establishment. IMATT also lobbied for greater Defence independence over its budget allocation. During his hand-over meeting with Brigadier Cholerton at the end of 2006, Brigadier Le Grys secured President

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[171] Interview with Colonel Mike Dent, *op. cit.*; Keen, *op. cit.*, p. 286; 'Sierra Leone Chief of Defence Staff To Be Recalled', *The Progress*, 12 April 2000, republished by *All Africa News* online at http://allafrica.com/stories/200004120309.html, accessed on 27/05/16.
[172] Interview with Major General Adrian Freer, *op. cit.*
[173] Interview with Major General Jerry Thomas, *op. cit.*; '1,000 soldiers to be retired this year', *IRIN News*, *op. cit.*
[174] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*
[175] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security System Transformation*, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
[176] See Peter J. Middlebrook & Sharon M. Miller, 'Sierra Leone Security Sector Expenditure Review', Consultancy report prepared for the Department for International Development Sierra Leone Country Office (Lewes, DE, September 2006), p. 2; Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80.
[177] Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, p. 80.
[178] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*; Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, p. 79; Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*

Kabbah's assent to this proposal in principle.[179] However, Cholerton acknowledged that there was still little will to push downsizing ahead of elections:

> 'we, sort of, took the foot off the accelerator and accepted that the political imperative was to ease off a bit…Early on in my time they [Whitehall] said, "Hold, wait. Because of the elections let's not rock the boat. Anything that undermines confidence potentially undermines stability, let's just wait and then we'll take it up afterwards". And that's what we did.'[180]

Mark White, the DFID ACPP programme manager, similarly recalled how:

> 'It was clear to me in 2006 that the entire [security] sector was getting more and more nervous about what would happen in the election, so frankly there was no point in us flogging dead horses of other policy objectives that were in the log frame that we wanted the government to think about…if the hook is the election let's use the election, let's not do the thing that we said was in the document that was signed off two years ago that's not appropriate anymore.'[181]

While it was clear that electoral considerations rendered IMATT's policy objectives unachievable in the short term, this did not represent a total abandonment of the policy; instead, it represented a pragmatic attempt to "box clever" on the part of British advisers. Yet, the reduction in political will meant that IMATT was unable to implement its policies in toto. For example, manning control points were originally due to come into effect in 2007, yet the system remained unimplemented:

> 'as far as we could see, there wasn't anything falling off the end of the conveyor belt being made redundant. And so you had quite senior people, notionally drawing pay but not doing any work. Well, old people I should say…But as the mortality rate in Sierra Leone is huge, and average life expectancy is 47, it has its own natural wastage…So people were falling off the end of the conveyor belt by dying.'[182]

The prospect of manning control points proved too unpalatable for the RSLAF to digest, and after IMATT had transitioned to an advisory function, it lacked the ability to impose fundamental change on the RSLAF without political will.

The 2007 Elections: Democratic Soldiers Lacking Democratic Masters?

The 2007 elections in Sierra Leone saw a transition of power from the incumbent SLPP to the opposition APC, and were consequently viewed as an indicator of democratic progress.[183] The RSLAF did not intervene politically, but

[179] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*
[180] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[181] Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.*
[182] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[183] Department for International Development, 'Elections in Sierra Leone in 2007 and 2008' (London, 2008), p. 1, online at

did provide significant support to enable the elections to take place. Nonetheless, the political conduct of the elections remained both violent and neo-patrimonial, threatening to draw the security sector back into the political process. Therefore, just as the election cycle displayed a normative change in RSLAF behaviour, it also revealed significant weaknesses in IMATT's approach to defence reform. The 2007 presidential elections consequently acted as a microcosm of SSR in Sierra Leone.

The democratic change in government produced by the 2007 elections belied the continuing neo-patrimonial character of Sierra Leonean party politics. The three main parties contesting the election – the SLPP, the APC and the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) – all attempted to buy votes in an open fashion. International observers even witnessed crowds queuing outside the SLPP candidate's personal residence to receive cash and rice in return for promises of electoral support.[184] Such practices, though pernicious to multi-party democracy, reflected deep trends in Sierra Leonean society in which patrons historically presented cola nuts to clients, symbolically reflecting their obligation in a similar vein to the idiom 'true to his salt'.[185] Despite the degree of patronage disbursed by the SLPP during the 2007 elections, many recipients nonetheless voted for the opposition come the election day. This became known as 'watermelon politics', immortalised in a hit Sierra Leonean pop song during the election period by the same name. As Jörgel and Utas highlighted, 'Green is the colour of the SLPP party and the rind of the watermelon. Red is the colour of the APC and the flesh of the watermelon…The idea is that you can take money from the green party and wear their green t-shirt while your inside is actually red – like the watermelon'.[186]Jörgel and Utas concluded that watermelon politics represented

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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67647/elections-sl-2007-2008.pdf, accessed on 02/08/16; International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: A New Era of Reform?', Africa Report No. 143 (Dakar/Brussels, 31 July 2008), p. 1.

[184] Magnus Jörgel & Mats Utas, 'The Mano River Basin Area: Formal and Informal Security Providers in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone', Swedish Defence Research Agency (Stockholm, 2007), pp. 67-8; DFID, 'Elections in Sierra Leone', *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

[185] Jörgel & Utas, *op. cit.*, p. 68. The phrase 'true to his salt' (perhaps apocryphally) derives from the salary paid to roman legionaries, and has subsequently been associated with the raising of colonial troops during the British Raj with patrimonially reminiscent connotations. See for example, Robert Johnson, *True to their Salt: Indigenous Personnel in Western Armed Forces* (London, Hurst, forthcoming).

[186] Jörgel and Utas, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

'a small step towards democratic consolidation' by 'disconnecting money from vote'.[187]

However, the elections also saw a remobilisation of party militias. The SLPP largely drew its militiamen from former rebel military factions, such as the NPRC, AFRC and West Side Boys, with the APC relying on ex-RUF members, and the PMDC on former CDF fighters. Initially, these security details were armed with hand weapons, but rapidly appeared with firearms and began adopting wartime rebel customs once again.[188] In consequence, the election period witnessed significant outbreaks of violence, largely during the tense period between the first and second rounds, although there was also some violence in the run-up to the first round.[189] Most of the fighting occurred between party retainers in Freetown, though there were clashes up-country in Pajehun, Makeni, Bo and Kono.[190] A week before the second round, clashes between SLPP and APC party militias in Freetown sparked riots and significant looting, but were contained by police using tear gas.[191] Following the APC victory, the SLPP party headquarters was burnt down and houses in Freetown vandalised.[192] Some areas of the country also witnessed sporadic violence and

[187] Jörgel and Utas, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
[188] *Ibid.*, pp. 68-9.
[189] Interview with Jorge Guzman, Program Manager for the UNDP Electoral Technical Assistance Team in Sierra Leone, conducted in Freetown on 29 July 2008 by Nealin Parker as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 5, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/jorge-guzman, accessed on 04/08/16; Jörgel & Utas, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-70.
[190] Interview with Magnus Öhman, Country Director for the International Foundation for Electoral Systems in Sierra Leone, conducted in Freetown on 6 August 2008 by Ashely McCants as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 16, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/magnus-%C3%B6hman, accessed on 04/08/16; Interview with Mohamed Konneh, Program Officer for the National Democratic Institute in Sierra Leone, conducted in Freetown on 6 August 2008 by Nealin Parker as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 9, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/mohamed-konneh-0, accessed on 04/08/16; Interview with Samuel Harbor, Deputy Resident Representative for UNDP in Sierra Leone, conducted in Freetown on 9 May 2008 by Arthur Boutellis as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, pp. 4-5, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/samuel-harbor, accessed on 04/08/16.
[191] Jörgel and Utas, *op. cit.*, p. 70; 'Election Violence Hits Sierra Leone: Dozens Injured in Clashes Ahead of Presidential Run-off', *Al Jazeera Online*, 01 September 2007,online at http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2007/09/200852513502854226 7.html, accessed on 03/08/16.
[192] Interview with Dr Clever Nyathi, UNDP Technical Adviser to Sierra Leone's Political Parties Registration Commission, conducted in Bulawayo on 26 February 2013 by Rachel Jackson as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 13, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/dr-clever-nyathi, accessed on 04/08/16.

intimidation over the following months, as the SLPP and APC came to terms with the new governing order.[193]

In contrast to the unreformed nature of Sierra Leonean politics, the RSLAF provided significant support to the 2007 election process under the auspices of civilian control. This was chiefly achieved through the concept of "police primacy". Under this doctrine, the civilian SLP held primary responsibility for civil order, confining the RSLAF to external defence unless formally requested by the civilian authorities via a set protocol. Thus, police primacy supported democratic civil-military relations by delineating the role of the military and insulating it from domestic political tasks. A formal agreement was necessitated by the blurring of responsibilities between police and military that had occurred during the Rebel War. After the 1992 NPRC coup, the military junta had replaced a number of senior police officers with their own appointees, leading to a significant deterioration in relations between the two organisations. Subsequently, the military's own intelligence branch became involved in law enforcement investigations relating to the war effort, such as smuggling.[194]

Although akin to the British experience of Northern Ireland, police primacy was not an IMATT concept. First mooted by President Kabbah's administration in 1996, it remained high on his agenda throughout the war, likely in response to the continued unreliability of the military.[195] In September 1998, the British SLP Inspector General, Keith Biddle, put together a policy to implement police primacy, but its application was ultimately hampered by continued hostilities. Nonetheless, Biddle oversaw the attendance of the RSLAF's senior military police officer on the UK police command course at Bramshill, in an effort to import police primacy into the RSLAF.[196] The concept

[193] Interview with Moi Sellu, Program Officer for the International Foundation for Electoral Systems in Sierra Leone, conducted in Freetown on 30 August 2008 as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, pp. 2-3, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/moi-sellu, accessed on 04/08/16.
[194] Interview with Keith Biddle on 9 July 2015, *op. cit.*; also Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, p. 35; Interview with Sheka Mansaray, National Security Adviser and Special Adviser to the President of Sierra Leone, 1998-2000, and head of the Sierra Leonean Civil Service, 2001-2008, conducted in Freetown on 7 May 2008 by Arthur Boutellis as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/sheka-mansaray, accessed 25/05/16.
[195] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.,* p. 81; Committee on the Republic of Sierra Leone Police Force, 'Report of the Dr Banya Committee on the Republic of Sierra Leone Police Force' (Freetown, August 1996).
[196] Interview with Keith Biddle on 9 July 2015, *op .cit.*

was similarly reasserted in the 2003 Defence White Paper.[197] As Plan 2010 was being launched in 2004, however, IMATT officers felt that the concept was still culturally alien to the RSLAF, and consequently IMATT viewed one of its functions as 'buy[ing] the space and time to build the police up'.[198] Biddle too recognised this, and attempted to improve police capabilities by securing riot control equipment for the SLP from DFID.[199] By 2005, Commander IMATT felt that the RSLAF 'were prepared to give it a go, but deep down they were pretty mistrustful of the police'; in no small measure because they felt the SLP lacked the capability to actually carry out their allotted function.[200]

The concept only really matured after the Office of National Security (ONS) co-ordinated a formal Military Aid to the Civil Power (MACP) process in 2005 to define how the RSLAF could augment the SLP during civil unrest.[201] By 2006, Brigadier Le Grys observed that the RSLAF 'firmly understood civil-military interface, [and] firmly understood the role the police would have', but were still not universally receptive to the concept.[202] Nonetheless, this represented a significant shift in of itself. According to a perception study undertaken by British Defence Intelligence, in 2004 'participants perceived RSLAF and police roles to be unclear and overlapping'. By 2006, however, perception studies suggested that the RSLAF understood 'their role in relation to the police more clearly with less need to make direct comparisons between themselves and the police', such that relations between the two organisations had 'become, if not stronger, then more accepting'.[203] Indeed, slow adoption of the police primacy concept on the part of the RSLAF was attributed to a

[197] GOSL, 'Defence White Paper', *op. cit.*, para 4002.
[198] Interview with Colonel Philip Stack, *op. cit.*
[199] Interview with Keith Biddle by Gordon Peake, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-8; Interview with Adrian Horn, British mentor to the Sierra Leone Police, conducted in Norfolk on 5 December 2007 by Daniel Scher as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, pp. 9-10, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/adrian-horn, accessed 22/04/16.
[200] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*
[201] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, p. 35; Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.* Related policies on Military Aid to the Civil Authority and Military Aid to the Civil Community were only later clarified.
[202] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*
[203] Quoted in Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

'perceived discrepancy in reward levels rather than in an RSLAF desire to take back elements of the police's domestic security role'.[204]

Police primacy during the elections was enabled by close liaison between the different components of the security sector and their international observers and mentors. At national level, National Security Council meetings were focused towards elections, on which Brigadier Cholerton and the senior police advisor sat alongside the head of the National Electoral Commission (NEC).[205] The NEC also invited representatives of the SLP and RSLAF to its own coordination meetings, while the ONS provided intelligence support.[206] Initially, direct RSLAF support to elections was primarily logistical. Deploying ballot boxes and papers to polling stations up-country and withdrawing them within the correct timeframe proved a significant logistical challenge.[207] A memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between the NEC and the RSLAF, facilitating the use of military vehicles for election support. In all, the NEC gathered a fleet of around 350 vehicles to support the 2007 elections, of which around 80 vehicles were provided by the RSLAF – somewhat over a fifth of the NEC's total pool. In principle, the NEC could reduce the number of vehicles it was required to hire by using RSLAF vehicles, thus minimising expenditure. In the event, however, the RSLAF only agreed to the MOU on the condition that the NEC (using donor money) agreed to maintain, run, and in some instances refurbish the provided vehicles; a boon for the RSLAF, but one which likely negated the supposed cost benefits over private rentals.[208]

However, the RSLAF also performed a more traditional "Military Aid to the Civil Power" (MACP) role by providing additional personnel to reinforce election security. Although public order during the elections remained an SLP

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[204] Quoted in Albrecht & Jackson, *Security Sector Transformation*, *op. cit.*, p. 150, also Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, p. 92. This perception was likely compounded by Op PEBU.
[205] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[206] Interview with Mohamed Konneh, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-10; Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.*
[207] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[208] Interview with William Hogan, UN Logistics Adviser to the National Electoral Commission of Sierra Leone, conducted in Freetown on 1 August 2008 by Ashley McCants as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, pp. 5-6, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/william-hogan, accessed on 04/08/16; Interview with Jorge Guzman, *op. cit.* p. 14; Interview with Idrissa Kamara, District Electoral Officer for Bonthe District, conducted in Freetown on 29 July 2008 by Nealin Parker as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, pp. 3-4, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/idrissa-kamara, accessed on 04/08/16; Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*

responsibility under the doctrine of police primacy, it was clear that the SLP had insufficient personnel to police the elections. Additional manpower was brought in from the prison service, the Chiefdom police, and even traffic wardens, as well as elements of the RSLAF.[209] Although the majority of the security presence during the election period was provided by the civilian SLP, the RSLAF's military police were also deployed to patrol in the vicinity of some polling stations.[210] The RSLAF was also requested to deploy under the police primacy framework in order to maintain public order in areas where the SLP had been locally overwhelmed by violence. In Kono, for example, the SLP were met by petrol bombs in a prepared attack against local authorities. Although identified in advance by intelligence, police reinforcements specially trained in public order duties were overrun and the RSLAF was called in.[211]

The conduct of the RSLAF during the 2007 elections was perceived by IMATT as a vindication of both the concept of police primacy, and Plan 2010's institutional redevelopment of the RSLAF. In the words of Brigadier Cholerton, Commander IMATT during the elections, where deployed under MACP, 'the military didn't shoot, they just turned up, looked smart, showed discipline, didn't have to use firearms, and it completely quelled the situation'. Perhaps more importantly, after the situation had been stabilised the RSLAF withdrew and handed responsibility back to the SLP.[212] For Brigadier Cholerton, the elections:

> 'proved one of the long term strands of our activity, or our vision, which was to make them democratically accountable. And I think the election was actually a very big tick in that process; proving that they were democratically accountable 'cos they worked to the direction of the politicians in support of the police'.[213]

There were some instances of soldiers wearing mixed uniform and party colours on the election day, despite instructions to the contrary, but overall the military emerged from the election cycle without becoming publically tarnished by overt partisan political activity, as had been the case during the 2003 presidential

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[209] Interview with Richard Moigbe, Assistant Inspector-General of the Sierra Leone Police, conducted in Murray Town on 4 August 2008 by Nealin Parker as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, pp. 3-4, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/richard-moigbe, accessed on 04/08/16.
[210] Interview with Alex Paila, Voter Education Officer and Public Relations Officer for the National Electoral Commission in Bo District, conducted in Bo on 29 July 2008 by Ashley McCants as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 5, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/alex-paila, accessed on 04/08/16.
[211] Interview with Richard Moigbe, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
[212] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[213] *Ibid.*

race. This was undoubtedly helped by the fact the military voted on the same day as the rest of the electorate in 2007.[214] Thus, the 2007 elections, while flawed as a political process, were deemed to demonstrate significant progress in terms of Sierra Leonean civil-military relations, and in particular in terms of the norms of democratic accountability in the RSLAF.

Yet, the transition of power between the SLPP and APC following the election result was still dependent on international support, particularly in insulating the country's security institutions from patrimonial advances. The NEC made it clear that it viewed some of the activities of the incumbent Vice President and SLPP presidential candidate, Solomon Berewa, as unacceptable.[215] Kabbah himself attempted to declare a state of emergency between the two rounds of elections on no less than three occasions. As Brigadier Cholerton recalled,

> 'I had a very robust conversation with President Kabbah who did not believe the police could handle it without the military on the streets immediately…he was reluctant for them to assume a subordinate role to the police. He thought they'll be blood on the streets if you don't have the army out immediately – he said that to me'.[216]

In some quarters, this desire to deploy the military, effectively under martial law rather than police primacy, was seen as a ploy to suspend the run-off elections after the first round proved unfavourable for the SLPP. It was only prevented through concerted international pressure.[217] This dynamic is particularly problematic, given that continued normative reform of the RSLAF relied largely on political will to sustain externally-led change; at least until such time as IMATT's new generation of young officers had progressed in their careers sufficiently to oversee the force themselves.

While the 2007 elections demonstrated the distance the RSLAF had travelled since 2002, the success of the 2007 elections was in no small measure a testament to the guiding hand of the international community; IMATT

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[214] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*

[215] In the event, the head of the NEC invalidated the results from 477 polling stations which returned higher numbers of votes than they had registered voters during the run-offs; the invalidated votes where overwhelmingly cast for Berewa, and 426 of the 477 discounted polling stations were from the (generally pro-SLPP) south. The SLPP subsequently attempted to institute legal proceedings against Christiana Thorpe, the NEC head, and several southerners publically left the NEC in protest. International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: A New Era of Reform?', *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3; Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*

[216] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*

[217] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: A New Era of Reform?', *op. cit.*, p. 3.

included. Yet, the successful application of police primacy was widely viewed a measure of the security forces' developing integrity; a view shared by IMATT, but also somewhat grudgingly by President Kabbah, who had not expected the SLPP to loose office.[218] The elections were also a milestone for IMATT, as the RSLAF's conduct during the elections was used to justify greater British withdrawal from Sierra Leone. The impact of IMATT's withdrawal on the RSLAF's civil-military behaviour, and its military effectiveness, will be examined in the next chapter.

Conclusions

Plan 2010 marked a shift in British thinking on defence reform in Sierra Leone, away from stabilisation-focused "train and equip" capacity building towards a more long-term, strategic plan for normative change in the RSLAF. This was in no small measure the result of evident shortcomings in the previous wartime approach. As Plan 2010 took shape, and increasingly after its launch, IMATT attempted to produce normative civil-military behaviour in the RSLAF by promoting new cultural norms, inculcated by institutional mechanisms for socialisation and propagated by a managed process of generational change. The primary vehicle for this normative re-socialisation of a generation of RSLAF officers was professional military education. This was chiefly carried out at the Horton Academy, an environment controlled by IMATT, but also during tactical training courses (at Benguema and elsewhere) and civil education at the AFEC. IMATT sought to create the conditions for this socialisation through new, meritocratic recruitment procedures. It hoped to propagate these socialised officers and their new culture up the chain of command and, eventually, into key senior appointments from which they could sustain the normative change. The new career structure emphasised the importance of professional education at each promotional rung of the ladder, and depended on British-style boarding processes for selecting officers according to merit rather than patronage. Here, the British model effectively equated professional effectiveness with political accountability, largely because the absence of professional effectiveness in the

[218] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*; Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.* Kabbah was later distinctly unflattering about the conduct of the SLP during the 2007 elections, although international observers actually singled out the SLP senior leadership for praise in its management of the elections and transition; a contrast which only serves to underscore the raw SLPP reaction to electoral defeat. Kabbah, *Coming Back From the* Brink, *op. cit.*, p. 297; International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: A New Era of Reform?', *op. cit.*, p. 2.

RSLAF had tended to stem from neo-patrimonial appointments, which had also rendered the force unamenable to democratic oversight.

By 2007, Plan 2010's reforms had had some effect. Not only did the RSLAF remain politically neutral during an electoral cycle which saw the incumbent government leave power in favour of the political opposition, but they did so while providing significant logistical and security support under a rubric of police primacy. While much of the RSLAF senior leadership had historically been pro-APC and so were likely relieved to see Kabbah go, it should be remembered that the first successful coup in Sierra Leone's post-independence history occurred during an electoral transition of power between the incumbent SLPP government and their APC opposition.[219] At the same time, however, the 2007 elections revealed the continuing prevalence of neo-patrimonial practices in Sierra Leonean party politics, which threatened to re-politicise the military. Indeed, the largest restraining influence on political interference during the 2007 elections was the actions of the international community, rather than any new-found democratic convictions in the RSLAF.

The process of implementing institutional reforms in the RSLAF, in line with Plan 2010's model of generational change, proved to be highly contested. This was particularly so with regard to promotions and redundancies. IMATT used these two mechanisms in tandem to reshape the RSLAF officer corps. However, the prospect of downsizing in particular proved highly controversial, and was resisted by senior RSLAF officers for neo-patrimonial reasons. Although the first tranche was accepted without major incident, subsequent tranches of downsizing were used by IMATT to remove "old guard" individuals who IMATT viewed as obstacles to reform, and to reinforce IMATT's new career structure. This was bitterly resented by factions in the RSLAF, but was imposed owing to political support. IMATT also used succession planning of senior appointments to maintain the momentum of reform. To a significant extent, IMATT's ability to drive through changes in the face of senior RSLAF resistance was a product of successive IMATT commanders' relationships with President Kabbah. Through direct access to the President, and parallel chains of command and reporting lines in the RSLAF, IMATT was generally able to

[219] Anton Bebler, *Military Rule in Africa: Dahomey, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Mali* (New York, NY, Praeger, 1973).

outmanoeuvre RSLAF opposition to enforce change. To a degree, this political will was likely underpinned by conditionality in wider British aid to Sierra Leone,[220] but it also seems to have been the product of personal trust between Kabbah and a number of British IMATT commanders. Despite this use of political patronage, IMATT was not totally reliant on Kabbah to encourage change. IMATT's access to independent British and international sources of resource, which it could disburse or withhold depending on the RSLAF's attitude to change, allowed IMATT to promote reform somewhat independently of Sierra Leonean politics. Ultimately though, IMATT was unable to compel change in face of concerted political reluctance. This relationship thus rendered IMATT immensely influential on some occasions, as with the dismissal of the RSLAF CDS in 2003, and virtually impotent on others, as in the case of downsizings in the run up to the elections. IMATT's relationship with the RSLAF conforms to Posen's conception of the "military maverick", drawn from outside the status quo and enacting externally-imposed change on a reluctant military.[221]

However, the generational approach to reform was far more sophisticated than Posen's archetype of externally-derived coercion. IMATT's institutional changes sought to create norms by using the structure of a professional armed force as a vehicle for change. This matches Rosen's emphasis on institutional and bureaucratic processes, like promotional pathways and feedback loops, in pursuing intra-service rivalries.[222] While IMATT certainly used external sources of influence to impose change, these changes were primarily aimed at creating and leveraging intra-service dynamics, through which a younger generation of officers would "promote out" the "old guard". Tensions between RSLAF officers, epitomised by the 'friend of IMATT' phenomenon, and the conflict between threatened senior commanders and IMATT, demonstrate the extent and power of this dynamic in the RSLAF. Ironically, IMATT's dual mechanisms of political patronage and intra-service conflict to encourage change make IMATT appear like the "biggest man" amongst the "big men" of the RSLAF command; using political influence and somewhat subversive alternate chains of command to build a particular powerbase in the RSLAF – but one orientated around normative values and

[220] For discussion on this point, see Albrecht & Jackson, *Security System Transformation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-6.
[221] Posen, *op. cit.*
[222] Rosen, *op. cit.*

performance rather than region, party or tribe. In this sense, Plan 2010 represented a blend of both Posen and Rosen's characterisations of military change, but with each mechanism becoming mutually reinforcing rather than being mutually exclusive. While normative change was clearly incomplete by 2007, exacerbating the danger of externally-led re-politicisation, IMATT's model of generational change undoubtedly offers an example of one mechanism through which, to paraphrase Suhrke, "our" norms might become "theirs".[223]

IMATT's deliberate manipulation of generational divisions also suggests that the characterisation of peacetime reform as exclusively top-down in extant literature is overstated.[224] The institutional systems of recruitment, promotion and education IMATT implemented were established from the top, but their impact was aimed primarily at the junior and middle ranks of the RSLAF – at the ground – where normative socialisation was considered to be more effective. Ultimately, sustainable reform was to come about from within the RSLAF, through cultural change at the bottom of the military hierarchy being transported up the chain of command to the top. While a growing number of studies of military adaptation and learning have highlighted the importance of the reciprocal interaction between top-down and ground-up processes in institutionalising change,[225] the extent to which these dynamics are purely confined to cases of wartime adaptation appears questionable. As IMATT's interaction with the RSLAF under Plan 2010 shows, future studies of peacetime reform in Western armies may well reveal ground-up change and even peacetime adaptation,[226] especially given that Plan 2010 was primarily designed by the British and derived from British military practice.

The ultimate success of Plan 2010 in remaking the RSLAF can only be

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[223] Suhrke, *op. cit.*, p. 1292.

[224] See for example, Adam Grissom, 'The Future of Military innovation Studies', J*ournal of Strategic Studies*, 29:5 (2006), pp. 920-1; Theo Farrell, 'Improving in War: Military Adaptation and the British in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006–2009', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33:4 (2010), pp. 567-594.

[225] Notably, Robert T. Foley, Stuart Griffin & Helen McCartney, '"Transformation in contact": Learning the Lessons of Modern War', *International Affairs*, 87:2 (2011), pp. 253-70; Raphael D. Marcus, 'Military Innovation and Tactical Adaptation in the Israel-Hizballah Conflict: The Institutionalization of Lesson-Learning in the IDF', *Journal of Strategic Studies* (August 2014), p. 502; Saideman, *op. cit.*

[226] This possibility was also recently recognised by Griffin. See Stuart Griffin, 'Military Innovation Studies: Multidisciplinary or Lacking Discipline?', *Journal of Strategic Studies* (2016), p. 19, online first at http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01402390.2016.1196358?needAccess=true, accessed on 01/09/16.

judged in the light of RSLAF behaviour in IMATT's absence. The 2007 elections marked an increase in IMATT's drawdown in Sierra Leone, while also heralding a new political relationship between GOSL and IMATT. The next chapter will examine the impact of IMATT's withdrawal and political change on the changing cultural norms of the RSLAF. It will also explore the implicit relationship between normative civil-military culture and military effectiveness, which much of IMATT's professionalising agenda was premised upon.

8. Sustaining a Culture of Accountability: RSLAF Effectiveness and IMATT Withdrawal, 2007-2015

In 2007, Sierra Leone went to the polls for the second time since the end of the Rebel War, electing a new APC government led by President Ernest Bai Koroma. Presidential elections were conducted again in 2012, and on both occasions the RSLAF facilitated, but did not intervene politically. This was seen as the definitive measure of normative cultural change in the RSLAF, and enabled IMATT's replacement with the smaller civilian-led International Security Advisory Team (ISAT) in 2013. Indeed, the British Army continues to consider that IMATT 'set the template for future operations'.[1] Yet, the period following the 2007 elections, characterised by IMATT's slow draw-down and eventual withdrawal, also witnessed a gradual re-politicisation of Sierra Leonean civil-military relations; a rolling back of IMATT's professionalising vision for the RSLAF in favour of neo-patrimonial practices. Scholars such as Albrecht and Jackson have concluded that this does not simply reflect the contradictions inherent in exporting liberal democratic civil-military relations,[2] but specific flaws in IMATT's model of institutional change, which they consider overly reliant on a small coterie of local clients.[3] The apparent inability of Western cultural norms to persist in the RSLAF after IMATT's withdrawal lends credence to Krebs' argument, that a military's internal practices are simply a product of wider social and political trends.[4] Yet, this period was simultaneously defined by the RSLAF's increasing commitment to Peace Support Operations (PSOs), which increased military effectiveness, and also limited the worst excesses of neo-patrimonial re-politicisation of the RSLAF. This chapter examines the relationship between IMATT withdrawal, RSLAF participation on PSOs, and the political character of military culture in Sierra Leone.

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[1] British Army, 'Sierra Leone Case Study: The British Army's Contribution 1997 – 2015', Warfare Branch (Warminster, February 2016), p. 36; Lieutenant Colonel Harold Simpson MBE, 'UK Sponsored Stabilisation and Reform in Sierra Leone 2002-2013: A Unique Case or a Template for Future Intervention(s)?', Sandhurst Occasional Papers No. 19 (Camberley, 2014).
[2] Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone 1997-2013: Defence, Diplomacy and Development in Action* (London, Routledge, 2014), p. 3, pp. 171-9; Paul Jackson, 'Security Sector Reform and State Building', *Third World Quarterly*, 32:10 (2011), pp. 1803-1822.
[3] Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007* (Birmingham, GFN-SSR, 2009), p. 7.
[4] Ronald R. Krebs, 'One Nation under Arms? Military Participation Policy and the Politics of Identity', *Security Studies*, 14:3 (2005), pp. 535-6.

As the previous chapter demonstrated, IMATT's normative model of generational reform implicitly associated professional military behaviour, characterised by an emphasis on meritocracy and operational output, with civil-military accountability. This was largely the result of the previous neo-patrimonial decline of the RSLMF, during which politicised promotions and appointments undermined both military effectiveness and democratic accountability. More generally, this relationship between military effectiveness and civilian control has formed a consistent theme in scholarship on Western civil-military relations. Huntington's concept of objective control conceived of a self-governing military separate from political interference, in which professional values underpinned both effectiveness and accountability.[5] Although scholars have argued that military effectiveness, particularly at the strategic level, requires a more intimate interface between the civil and military spheres than Huntington's typology allows, they have nonetheless supported the relationship between professionalism, effectiveness, and accountability to civil order.[6] Bruneau and Matei's advancement of a new trinity of civil-military relations, in which civilian control is inseparable from military effectiveness and financial efficiency, maintains this relationship.[7] Equally, King has demonstrated the relationship between professionalisation and operational effectiveness in his work on task cohesion in Western armies.[8]

However, this relationship remains over-theorised and under-examined. Indeed, Bruneau and Matei's new model is itself an attempt to 'escape from Huntington's labyrinth' by providing a more empirically testable construction of civil-military relations.[9] In the case of Sierra Leone, Albrecht and Haenlein have argued that PSOs provided the RSLAF with a new, external locus of military

[5] Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1957).
[6] Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York, NY, The Free Press, 1960).
[7] Florina Christiana Matei, 'A New Conceptualisation of Civil-Military Relations' in Thomas C. Bruneau & Florina Cristiana Matei (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2013), pp. 26-38. See also Thomas C. Bruneau, 'Efficiency in the Use of Resources', in *ibid*, p. 29-33.
[8] Anthony King, *The Combat Soldier: Infantry Tactics and Cohesion in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013).
[9] Methodologically, Olmeda has advanced comparative studies as a possible mechanism for testing such relationships. See José A. Olmeda, 'Escape from Huntington's Labyrinth: Civil-Military Relations and Comparative Politics', in Bruneau & Matei, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-76.

identity; at once providing the force with a focus and keeping it busy.[10] Yet, this observation only provides further questions. If, as Haenlein and Albrecht assert, PSOs created a particular identity in the RSLAF, presumably with specific normative behaviours attached, how do these norms of overseas intervention preclude domestic political intervention? Indeed, the presumption that military effectiveness and civil-military accountability are mutually supported by military professionalism is openly questioned in much scholarship on non-Western civil-military relations; not least because of differing conceptions of military professionalism. Although ethnically stacking the military is not universally accepted as an effective method of coup-proofing a regime,[11] at least one study of the Syrian officer corps acknowledged that while this practice undermined military effectiveness, it did provide the regime with a degree of political control over its armed forces.[12] Equally, the influence of the military during processes of democratisation has led to overt campaigns of political education and supervision, alongside military professionalisation, in some young democracies.[13] Anecdotally, the 15 July 2016 coup attempt in Turkey demonstrates that even relatively Westernised, professionalised and effective armed forces are not immune from political behaviour.

This chapter argues that promotions and appointments define military culture. It was not the supposed identity-producing benefits of PSOs that curbed the worst excesses of re-politicisation in RSLAF, but the practical need to ensure military effectiveness on PSOs, which necessitated the maintenance of a degree of meritocracy even as IMATT withdrew, simultaneously helping to underpin civil-military accountability. This chapter proceeds in four sections. First, the impact of IMATT's withdrawal on the institutional dimensions of Plan 2010 reforms is examined, alongside the RSLAF's associated re-politicisation. The chapter then turns to the RSLAF's operational deployments during the period, exploring the levels of military performance displayed by the RSLAF

[10] Peter Albrecht & Cathy Haenlein, 'Sierra Leone's Post-Conflict Peacekeepers', *RUSI Journal*, 160:1 (2015), pp. 26-36.
[11] Philip Roessler, 'The Enemy Within: Personal Rule, Coups, and Civil War in Africa', *World Politics*, 63:02 (2011), pp. 300-346.
[12] Hicham Bou Nassif, '"Second-Class": The Grievances of Sunni Officers in the Syrian Armed Forces', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 38:5 (2015), pp. 626-649.
[13] Marco Jowell, 'Cohesion Through Socialization: Liberation, Tradition and Modernity in the Rwanda Defence Force (RDF)', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 8:2 (2014), pp. 278-93; Zoltan D. Barany, *The Soldier and the Changing State: Building Democratic Armies in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 2012).

during PSOs, election security and the Ebola response. The third section then examines the relationship between operational effectiveness and military accountability. The chapter concludes that the drive for military effectiveness did help reinforce processes of democratic accountability in the RSLAF, but only in the context of Plan 2010's existing normative agenda.

IMATT Withdrawal and the Limits of External Influence

The 2007 elections provided an opportunity for the British Government to reduce its commitment in Sierra Leone, precipitating the gradual drawdown of IMATT. Although IMATT had been slowly reducing in size since the end of the Rebel War, this was accelerated following the elections. By the end of 2008, IMATT had reduced to approximately 70 personnel. IMATT's Brigade Advisory and Support Teams (BASTs), responsible for mentoring brigade staffs and their subordinate battalions, were first reduced in strength, then amalgamated, and finally withdrawn altogether in 2009, bringing IMATT's strength down to around 50. IMATT subsequently became entirely reliant on importing STTTs to conduct any direct tactical training in the RSLAF.[14] This draw-down continued until the 2012 presidential elections, after which IMATT was replaced by the joint civil and military ISAT. This was to oversee all enduring aspects of the UK's development and SSR activity in Sierra Leone, although the British military presence in the country was subsequently augmented in response to the West African Ebola pandemic under the auspices of Operation Gritrock.[15] The reduction in strength during this period had significant implications for IMATT's influence, both in the RSLAF, and politically, limiting IMATT's ability to pursue further reforms. It also impeded IMATT's capacity to protect the institutional changes implemented under Plan 2010, which were so fundamental to its original model of generational cultural change.

IMATT's diminishing size and status had a direct impact on its ability to implement change in the RSLAF. Initially, Brigadier Cholerton did not witness any immediate change in defence policy as a result of the APC's electoral

[14] Interview with Participant A22, a British Army officer serving in IMATT in 2008-9, conducted in Shrewsbury on 24 November 2015; Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-4.

[15] See for example, Martin Bricknell, T. Hodgetts, K. Beaton and A. McCourt, 'Operation GRITROCK: The Defence Medical Services' Story and Emerging Lessons from Supporting the UK Response to the Ebola Crisis', *Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps*, 162 (2016), pp. 169-75.

victory, and the incumbent CDS, Major General Sam M'Boma, was retained for nine months by the new government, in what Cholerton described as 'a decent degree of leaving alone'.[16] Following the elections, IMATT took up the issue of RSLAF downsizing once again, and in February 2008 the Defence Council agreed to a further reduction in the RSLAF's establishment through the disbandment of one brigade and two infantry battalions. This was achieved by merging the Freetown Garrison with a provincial infantry brigade.[17] Although the RSLAF did eventually reduce to around 8,500 all ranks, redundancies were only to affect junior ranks despite the loss of command appointments.[18] In 2010, IMATT was still struggling to implement manning control points.[19] The new Defence Minister was not implacably opposed to further redundancies – one senior IMATT officer characterised his attitude as one of, 'As long as it's really good and the brightest, shiniest thing in West Africa, I don't really mind too much how big it is' – but this view was not shared by the RSLAF.[20] The RSLAF's opposition to further reductions, combined with IMATT's reduced ability to influence RSLAF behaviour, consequently led to tensions between IMATT staff and Whitehall. As Colonel Jamie Martin, the final Commander IMATT, recalled:

> 'I felt the UK was fixated on 8,500, never a soldier more…it became a little bit of a mantra, and I became a bit bored of banging the drum endlessly, because no-one…would actually listen to the logic that we shouldn't beat them up about it…we're not really spending a huge amount of UK tax payers' money here anymore. We're downsizing. We might not want to find ourselves hanged by this particular thing for ever more.'[21]

Indeed, contrary to both Whitehall and GOSL's view, the RSLAF still hoped to re-expand should sufficient funds become available.[22] As each phase of RSLAF downsizing was accompanied by further reductions in IMATT's establishment,

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[16] Interview with Brigadier (retd.) Iain Cholerton CBE, Commander IMATT 2007, conducted in Herefordshire on 16 July 2015; Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, p. 75; Samuel John, 'CDS Mboma Exits as Nelson Takes Over', *Awoko News*, online at http://awoko.org/2008/10/02/cds-mboma-exits-as-nelson-takes-over/, accessed 15/08/16.
[17] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-1; Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence, 'The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) – Brigades', online at http://www.mod.gov.sl/rslaf-bridgades.html, accessed 15/08/16.
[18] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-2.
[19] Interview with Participant A18, a British officer serving with IMATT, 2010-13, conducted in Hampshire on 27 October 2015.
[20] Interview with Participant A19, a senior British officer in IMATT 2008-11, conducted by Skype on 20 October 2015.
[21] *Ibid.*
[22] Interview with Colonel (retd.) Jamie Martin, Commander IMATT 2011-3, conducted in Dorset on 21 July 2015.

IMATT's ability to pursue further RSLAF reductions diminished the closer the RSLAF got to Plan 2010's target.[23]

IMATT's political influence was also reduced by the change of government in 2007. Under the previous SLPP government, Kabbah had simultaneously served as President, and therefore, commander-in-chief, and as the Minister of Defence, appointing a Deputy Defence Minister to oversee day-to-day matters. Mark White, DFID advisor in Sierra Leone in 2005-6, felt that this presidential trinity effectively arrested decision making in the MOD, as no important decisions could be made without Kabbah's approval, but he had insufficient time (or inclination) to devote to the MOD alongside his other presidential duties.[24] Consequently, IMATT had lobbied for the appointment of a separate Minister of Defence since at least 2005. IMATT officers felt that Kabbah had been reluctant to relinquish the role for fear of a coup.[25] But equally, because the President was automatically commander-in-chief, it was difficult for IMATT to demonstrate sufficient need for an independent minister with a clearly separate role.[26] However, the incoming APC administration did separate the roles, appointing a Paolo Conteh as Minister of Defence and National Security. Yet this concomitantly reduced IMATT's political influence, as it served to insulate Commander IMATT from the new president, Koroma. Consequently, IMATT became increasingly reliant on Paolo Conteh to drive change.

Although the military's reputation as an APC stronghold helps explain why President Koroma was willing to divest himself of the Defence ministerial portfolio, the APC government evidently remained somewhat sceptical about both the SLP and the RSLAF's reliability. In 2008, for example, the storage and destruction of a large quantity of seized cocaine was entrusted to IMATT over both the SLP and the RSLAF, by presidential decree.[27] Conteh's ability to make decisions independently from the President thus remained severely constrained and Colonel Martin found that he still deferred most important decisions to the

[23] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, p. 80
[24] Interview with Mark White, DFID SILSEP programme manager 2005-6, conducted in London on 17 July 2015.
[25] Interview with Brigadier (retd.) Barry Le Grys MBE, Commander IMATT 2005-6, conducted in London on 24 July 2015; Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[26] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[27] Interview with Participant A24, a retired British officer in IMATT 2007-9, conducted in Exeter on 26 November 2015.

President. Any democratic benefit from distributing control of the military through the appointment of a separate Defence Minister was also limited by the fact that Conteh was not a Member of Parliament, and so served in an executive capacity answerable to the President in person; something typical of what White described as Sierra Leone's 'sofa politics'.[28] Conteh's appointment also proved divisive in the RSLAF, at least initially. Colonel Martin recalled his habit of attending RSLAF events dressed in camouflage uniform and wearing a bush hat and aviator sunglasses, which drew considerable comment in the Sierra Leonean press:

> 'He just had a style about him that occasionally grated…maybe I should have had the balls to say, "Look, you know Minister, I don't think that's a very good idea"…if there was a problem, if something had gone wrong, he would tend to rant and harangue the senior officers…they would be more worried about apportioning blame and deciding whose fault it was, than actually working out why it had gone wrong and trying to fix the problem. So his style occasionally I thought was inappropriate. But he was well connected with the president'.[29]

Nonetheless, as a member of a prominent APC dynasty, Conteh was politically well connected. He was the nephew of former APC president Major General Joseph Momoh, and had previously served as a major in the RSLAF military police. When Momoh was overthrown by the NPRC early in the Rebel War, Conteh moved to the UK, where he trained as a lawyer and worked for the Department for Work and Pensions. Prior to the 2007 elections, Conteh had been the APC's primary fundraiser in the UK, and it was widely believed that he had received the post in return for his loyal services to Koroma and the party.[30] This did give Conteh a degree of political surety, which may have facilitated a degree of political independence for the MOD.[31]

In a statement of IMATT's diminishing status, Commander IMATT was reduced from a one star appointment to a full colonel role in late 2008, beginning with the appointment of Colonel Hugh Blackman. In an attempt to offset IMATT's diminishing influence, Blackman persuaded Whitehall to extend the tour length of senior IMATT staff from one to two years. Subsequently,

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[28] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*; Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.*
[29] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*; 'Combat-Clad Minister Shocks Sierra Leone', *Awareness Times*, 11 January 2008, online at http://news.sl/drwebsite/exec/view.cgi?archive=5&num=7359, accessed on 15/08/16.
[30] Patrick Hassan-Morlai, 'Profile of New Minister of Defence and National Security', *The Patriotic Vanguard*, 24 October 2007, online at http://www.thepatrioticvanguard.com/profile-of-new-minister-of-defence-and-national-security, accessed on 15/08/16; Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*; Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[31] Interview with Mark White, *op. cit.*

IMATT attempted to make up for its reduced size by developing more sustained personal relationships with its Sierra Leonean counterparts.[32] Conteh did prove amenable to RSLAF reform in principle, and Brigadier Cholerton felt he was 'receptive to change…a new broom'.[33] Indeed, a senior IMATT officer serving in 2009 recalled Conteh's apparent enthusiasm for generational change:

> 'Sometimes Paulo would say, "I've got the perfect plan. Let's just get so-and-so, promote him straight to one star, find him a job, and then next year he can become the X", and I'd say, "Well, that's all very well, but he's got to be credible", while at the same time saying, "There's nothing I want more, but all of these lieutenant colonels we've invested so much British energy in, being promoted straight into the senior management level, they've got to succeed not fail otherwise the great new scheme is immediately undermined".'[34]

British officers were conscious that RSLAF staff training remained 'quite superficial', implicitly limiting the speed at which generational change could occur.[35] Consequently, IMATT officers found themselves attempting to periodically manage Conteh's expectations, while simultaneously still agitating for change. Hence presidential patronage for IMATT-led reform was consequently replaced by ministerial patronage following the 2007 change of government.

Despite IMATT's reducing size, Commander IMATT was nonetheless still able to exercise significant influence at critical junctures. This was most obvious in the replacement of the Sierra Leonean CDS, Major General Alfred Nelson-Williams, following a rift with IMATT in 2010. Though drawn from the wartime generation of senior RSLAF officers, IMATT initially perceived Nelson-Williams as a competent and reform-minded professional soldier. One senior IMATT officer commented that Nelson-Williams 'was clever enough to play a good game with IMATT, sufficient that we were convinced that he was the rising star and the new future for the RSLAF'.[36] Indeed, IMATT had recommended him for appointment to CDS in 2003 and again in 2008.[37] By 2010, however, senior IMATT officers believed that Nelson-Williams was surreptitiously undermining

[32] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A18, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[33] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[34] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] *Ibid.*
[37] Interview with Colonel (retd.) Mike Dent CBE, SILSEP and IMATT Adviser to the Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence 1999-2002, conducted in Worcester on 20 November 2015; Interview with Major General (retd.) Adrian Freer OBE, Commander IMATT 2002-3, conducted in London on 29 July 2015; Interview with Participant A16, a senior British officer serving in IMATT in 2003-4, conducted in Somerset on 10 October 2015; Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*

the RSLAF's accountability. Tensions came to a head when IMATT concluded that Nelson-Williams was involved in serious mismanagement of procurement, by arranging contracts to acquire equipment for PSOs from dubious sources.[38] Colonel Blackman appealed to Conteh, and Nelson-Williams was duly replaced. As one senior British officer serving in IMATT at the time remarked, senior RSLAF appointments remained to a certain degree 'inevitable, as in inevitably we have an IMATT solution because we know the bloke, we get on with him really well, we think he's quite competent. And to a degree we can influence him, it's all about internal management, but he's competent to do the job'.[39]

However, the fractious relationship between Nelson-Williams and IMATT was itself the product of IMATT's reduced influence and power. In particular, IMATT officers believed that Colonel Blackman's rank – formally, two below Nelson-Williams – played an important role, and was certainly a clear indication to the RSLAF that the UK was seeking to disengage from Sierra Leone.[40] Nelson-Williams' attempts to limit IMATT's influence in the RSLAF were certainly more vocal than his predecessors. In 2009, for example, Sierra Leone's *The Lion* newspaper ran the front-page headline 'Racism at IMATT?' alongside a photo of Colonel Blackman captioned 'Colonel Huge Blackman…is he a racist?', in a story at least one IMATT officer attributed to Nelson-Williams.[41] The article alleged that Colonel Blackman exercised a 'constant threat to submit derogatory reports against the RSLAF to Britain' and railed against Blackman's alleged disrespect for senior Sierra Leonean officers and his privileged access to the President.[42] As the previous chapter demonstrated, these mechanisms had been consistently employed by IMATT to encourage the RSLAF to reform since at least the launch of Plan 2010 in 2004, but senior RSLAF officers only appear to have been in a position to openly contest their legitimacy after IMATT began to downsize; perhaps because the RSLAF was becoming less reliant on IMATT, but undoubtedly also because IMATT's influence had waned. Nonetheless, Alfred Nelson-Williams was still replaced in

[38] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A24, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[39] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[40] *Ibid.*
[41] 'Racism at IMATT? Who, How, When', *The Lion*, 3 August 2009, cover page; Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.* Colonel Hugh Blackman was often misnamed 'Huge' by Sierra Leoneans.
[42] Racism at IMATT? Who, How, When', *The Lion*, 3 August 2009, back page.

2010 at IMATT's insistence, while Colonel Blackman remained until the end of his posting in early 2011.[43]

While IMATT was able to exercise periodic influence at critical junctures, it proved unable to prevent neo-patrimonial practices seeping back into RSLAF recruitment and promotions. In 2007, Brigadier Cholerton became aware of significant corruption occurring in RSLAF recruitment processes. New recruits reporting for initial training at Benguema were not the same individuals who had passed the selection process. Instead, a senior RSLAF officer was effectively selling enlistments to illiterate soldiers and allowing literate surrogates to take the selection tests in their name. Yet Brigadier Cholerton had some difficulty in clamping down on this pernicious practice, as the officer responsible benefitted from better political patronage than the then CDS, and Cholerton was forced to take the matter up with the President.[44] By 2008, the RSLAF had effectively formalised an ethnic quota system in recruitment, with regional teams established to recruit from among their own regional groups. In principle, this encouraged competitive selection, as Sheka Mansaray recalled:

> 'I made the public statement that if you recruit lemons, you end up with lemons in the army. Don't blame anybody, no government, if they become sergeant majors for the rest of their lives instead of becoming brigadiers, that's your fault…Now in the army when they want to recruit they go to the regions, they ask people to send nominations.'[45]

However, it also reinforced the salience of ethnicity and region as defining career attributes in the RSLAF, potentially reinforcing the force's patrimonial character. By 2011, regional brigades were sifting applicants prior to the central selection process, introducing even greater subjectivity into the system.[46] Recruitment drives had also become less routine as the RSLAF increasingly

[43] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*; Jon-Bu, 'Big Changes in RSLAF as… Nelson-Williams Sent on Terminal Leave', *Awoko News*, n.d., online at http://awoko.org/2010/08/25/big-changes-in-rslaf-as%E2%80%A6-nelson-williams-sent-on-terminal-leave/, accessed on 15/08/16; State House Communications Unit, 'Changes in the Hierarchy of the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF)', *Sierra Express Media*, 24 August 2010, online at http://www.sierraexpressmedia.com/?p=12978, accessed on 15/08/16.

[44] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*

[45] Interview with Sheka Mansaray, National Security Adviser and Special Adviser to the President of Sierra Leone, 1998-2000, and head of the Sierra Leonean Civil Service, 2001-2008, conducted in Freetown on 7 May 2008 by Arthur Boutellis as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 15, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/sheka-mansaray, accessed 25/05/16.

[46] Interview with Participant A18, *op. cit.*; this was continued in later recruitment drives, see Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence, 'Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) Recruitment Drive 2013/14', online at http://www.mod.gov.sl/docs/RSLAF%20Recruitment%202013.pdf, accessed on 25/05/16.

struggled to find sufficient capital to regularly fund the process. IMATT remained heavily involved in recruiting,[47] but attempted to further indigenise the RSLAF's recruiting processes in 2012, ahead of its own withdrawal.[48] As one IMATT officer involved in this process observed, 'the younger generation got it…[but] would do it in their own way'. Worryingly though, the same officer noted how increasingly the RSLAF 'would just look at their [recruits'] reports and just know they were a good egg'.[49] As one British officer later commented of this transitional period at Benguema, where recruits were selected and trained: 'there's always a challenge when you build and institution like that, or rebuild it, and the point at which you step back, [and] that particular bit wobbled badly.'[50]

Despite IMATT's attempts to maintain meritocratic objectivity, RSLAF promotions also became increasingly subject to political or patrimonial influence. One senior British officer serving in IMATT from 2008 estimated that about 20 per cent of board results were interfered with in some way, with 'all sorts of nonsense going on behind closed doors'.[51] Consequently, IMATT retained a staff officer inside the MOD's personnel directorate after most other posts had been withdrawn in order to maintain oversight of RSLAF promotions. One IMATT officer serving in the MOD in 2010-12 found that while the RSLAF still went through the motions of conducting promotions boards, officers' tribal and familial background were now openly discussed during selections. RSLAF officers were well aware that IMATT disapproved of their patrimonial tendencies, and so RSLAF board members tended to slip in Krio when discussing candidates' social and ethnic backgrounds to try and avoid IMATT oversight.[52] A British officer serving as part of Freetown Garrison in 2008-9 observed how even relatively junior RSLAF officers were attuned to these patrimonial dynamics: 'You'll hear the comment all the time, "That's Sesay's man, that's his man", and they'll align themselves to people they see as being powerful, people who can help them.'[53] By the time Ebola hit Sierra Leone, a UK Stabilisation Unit civilian expert found little correlation between rank and

[47] Interview with Participant A18, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[48] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[49] Interview with Participant A18, *op. cit.*
[50] Interview with Participant A5, a senior British officer who served in Sierra Leone, conducted in Exeter on 14 June 2015.
[51] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[52] Interview with Participant A18, *op. cit.*
[53] Interview with Participant A24, *op. cit.*

experience among the RSLAF, with some officers' careers having visibly stagnated under a neo-patrimonial glass ceiling.[54]

As IMATT's influence diminished, its approach to neo-patrimonial practices in the RSLAF subtly changed. Rather than attempt to rigorously contest the results of every board, one senior IMATT officer considered that 'the fundamental debate was much more about accelerating youngsters into the hierarchy, and the rate at which you could reasonably do that'.[55] Similar sentiments applied to IMATT's approach to neo-patrimonial corruption. Colonel Martin recalled that 'we were always aware that there was a certain amount of corruption going on, that it was probably inevitable, and unless it directly impacted on military effectiveness there probably wasn't much point in us trying to do anything about it.'[56] To a certain extent, both RSLAF patrimonialism and IMATT's desired generational change were constrained by the RSLAF's own obsession with seniority. Colonel Martin, Commander IMATT in 2011-13, considered that seniority was more important to the RSLAF even than tribal background, perhaps as a hangover from the SLA's origins in the Victorian British military system.[57] Nonetheless, rigid adherence to seniority also impeded meritocracy, as officers were promoted by seniority rather than competence.[58] Some IMATT officers did feel that although the RSLAF did not maintain a professionalised promotional system based solely on merit, they were nonetheless aware of the dangers of ethnically stacking the military.[59] IMATT's reduced influence over the RSLAF's promotional system was nonetheless a product of its diminishing political impact. While Conteh was generally supportive of IMATT's reform agenda, he also pursued his own political agendas, which IMATT was increasingly unable to resist. One frustrated IMATT officer recalled conversations with Conteh over politically-motived senior promotions, thus:

> '"Minister, let me show you a succession plan. This is what I recommended, this is what you did. Here are clear points of failure, the evidence is self-explanatory. Let us try and ensure places like the Horton Academy" – hence the enormous development placed in that – "develop young officers, mark them honestly, report

[54] Interview with Participant A25, a Stabilisation Unit Deployable Civilian Expert in Sierra Leone 2015-6, conducted in London on 27 April 2016.
[55] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[56] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[57] *Ibid.*
[58] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*
[59] Interview with Participant A18, *op. cit.*

> on them honestly, they have annual reports, they have records kept". All that basic stuff which my predecessors must have fought over since 2000 and dot, and we were still fighting over then.'[60]

Yet in 2010, senior officers still did not receive formal reports, resulting in 'some frankly idiot decisions'.[61] Allegations and recriminations over politicised promotions and dismissals were even played out in the Sierra Leonean press, publically highlighting the power struggles between Conteh and elements of the RSLAF's senior officer corps.[62]

Continued resistance to the norms of Western democratic civil-military relations raises questions about the efficacy of Plan 2010's institutional reforms. As in the MOD personnel directorate, IMATT retained officers in the Horton Academy long after other posts were withdrawn. Indeed, these two functions – promotions and professional education – represent the twin bastions of Plan 2010's approach to generational and cultural change. However, the generational model of change IMATT had embarked upon meant that the fruits of such labours were only starting to be seen as IMATT was leaving. The first RSLAF officers to receive junior staff training at the Horton Academy as subalterns and captains were only beginning to return as majors and lieutenant colonels on the intermediate courses in 2010. In Martin's view, these officers 'were beginning to be quite good, but in the context of an African army'.[63] By that stage, the Horton Academy itself was also beginning to be more self-sustaining. Although the Director of the Horton Academy was still an IMATT officer, by 2012 the Chief Instructor was an RSLAF lieutenant colonel who had himself passed through the Horton Academy system.[64] As one British lieutenant colonel, himself a veteran of IMATT, found when he visited the Horton Academy to teach a defence diplomacy course, junior RSLAF officers he'd worked with in 2004 were just starting to occupy positions of influence in 2013.[65] But by then, IMATT had long since ceased to exercise oversight or influence over the daily behaviours of the wider RSLAF. As a British officer in Freetown Garrison following the 2007 elections perceptively observed, 'Do you affect the younger

[60] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[61] *Ibid.*
[62] 'Brig. Mondeh and Paolo Conteh: What happened?', *Standard Times Press Newspaper*, n.d., online at http://standardtimespress.org/?p=3871, accessed on 15/08/16.
[63] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[64] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*
[65] Interview with Participant A17, a senior British Army officer in IMATT 2004-5, conducted in London on 26 October 2015.

officers? Yes you do, but not as much effect as that brigade commander, that commanding officer, that company commander.'[66] Thus, the Horton Academy and the increasingly limited British mentoring could not fundamentally displace the wider Sierra Leonean milieu in which RSLAF soldiers were immersed.

In particular, the closure of the BASTs resulted in a dramatic reduction in IMATT's capacity to effect change in the RSLAF. This was largely due to the continuing unreliability of the RSLAF's own chain of command. A British officer serving in 3 BAST immediately after the 2007 elections found that RSLAF officers habitually submitted inaccurate reports to their superiors. RSLAF commanders at all levels attempted to conceal issues and inflate achievements, believing that any reports which were less than rose-tinted would reflect badly on their leadership and harm their career progression. The IMATT officer felt that this dynamic was exacerbated by a lack of genuine opportunities to demonstrate competence available to RSLAF officers, and the continued prevalence of favouritism and patrimonialism among commanders. This effectively produced 'two lines of communication: there was the RSLAF line of communication, the normal brigade reporting chain, and there was the IMATT [one], which was almost an external validation system.'[67] Unfortunately, the closure of the BASTs deprived IMATT of real knowledge of RSLAF activity at the ground level, closing the feedback loop through which IMATT could assess the progress of reform and intervene in issues; something Rosen described as essential to change.[68] As Brigadier Cholerton, who left post as Commander IMATT after the 2007 elections concluded, 'By reducing size you reduce influence, [and] reduce oversight' – the two being intrinsically linked.[69]

IMATT's reduced presence allowed long-standing RSLAF resentments at civilian control over the armed forces to re-emerge. In 2007, Brigadier Cholerton believed that the RSLAF had accepted that the reformed national security architecture was now a fact of life.[70] Yet five years later, Colonel Martin found that while the senior officers generally understood the need for civilian control in

[66] Interview with Participant A24, *op. cit.*
[67] Interview with Participant A22, *op. cit.*
[68] Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1991).
[69] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[70] *Ibid.*

the MOD, IMATT's younger generation chafed at its perceived inefficiencies.[71] Salaries went unpaid for several months on occasion, and GOSL's financial instability had knock-on implications for RSLAF planning.[72] These frustrations led RSLAF officer to regularly try to bypass official procurement and financial oversight mechanisms.[73] Colonel Martin consequently described the relationship between civilian and military elements in the MOD as 'Fractious', and noted a 'strong antipathy between the MOD civil servants and the serving officers. The serving officers I think felt that, and probably with a degree of truth, that they could do a much better job if they were just allowed to get on and do what they wanted.'[74]

However, this discontent was symptomatic of a more profound legitimacy crisis. IMATT recognised that many RSLAF officers continued to view the British-imposed model of a joint civil-military MOD as alien and inappropriate; something likely not helped by the increasingly politicised nature of RSLAF appointments. One British officer serving as IMATT transitioned to ISAT considered this debate broadly healthy:

> 'you don't hear the military talking about whether the military should be subordinate to the national government – they talk about how it should be, but not whether it should be – and that's a significant and important transition'.[75]

This officer considered that open debate about the mechanisms of civilian control represented an improvement from the RSLMF's previous proclivities, described as 'muttering in the corners or suddenly deciding that the Minister needed to go'. He concluded that, 'However much the military were frustrated at times by that manifestation of political control, it was a frustration that they talked about not something that they acted on.'[76] Yet as IMATT's presence faded, RSLAF soldiers did increasingly act. In early 2009, a letter was circulated in the RSLAF written by an anonymous group of soldiers threatening a coup if the unreliable payment of salaries and allowances was not addressed, blaming corruption among the senior command.[77] In August 2013, a group of soldiers from Teko Barracks in Makeni were arrested for allegedly mutinying and plotting

[71] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[72] Interview with Participant A18, *op. cit.*
[73] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*
[74] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[75] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*
[76] *Ibid.*
[77] Interview with Participant A24, *op. cit.*

to overthrow the President. The soldiers, including at least one junior officer, were eventually court-martialled and subsequently acquitted, which some in IMATT pointed out was a positive step towards due process and the rule of law.[78] Yet, these incidents equally demonstrate a degree of fragility in the RSLAF's democratic accountability.

The Development of Military Effectiveness in the RSLAF

As IMATT began to withdraw following the 2007 elections, the RSLAF's focus shifted towards PSOs. This resulted in demonstrable improvements in the RSLAF's military effectiveness, despite IMATT's reduced presence. In 2009, the RSLAF provided a reconnaissance company to UNAMID in Darfur for a number of roulements. They then progressed to supplying a battalion strength formation to UNAMSIL in Somalia. Yet the RSLAF's new operational focus on PSOs did not immediately detract from the RSLAF's democratic accountability domestically. Indeed, the RSLAF provided election support to the 2012 elections under the rubric of police primacy, and troops earmarked to deploy to Somalia formed the spearhead of the RSLAF's much-vaunted response to the Ebola Pandemic.

Despite the RSLAF's later interest in PSOs, the RSLAF's primary task in the 2003 Defence White paper was to guarantee Sierra Leone's territorial integrity.[79] This centred on border security and conventional deterrence, but was a role that the RSLAF struggled to fulfil. In early 2003, for example, there were a number of incursions by Liberian rebel groups into Sierra Leone. On 10 January, Liberian militiamen burned 13 houses during one such incursion, and made off with abandoned RSLAF weapons and radios. Local villagers refused to return to the area, citing the RSLAF's inability to protect them. On 17 February, Sierra Leone officially closed the bridge over the Mano River into Liberia, and the RSLAF did rebuff some minor raids in April. However, evidence of collusion between the RSLAF and Liberian rebel groups continued, despite

[78] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*; Alusine Sesay & Gabriel Benjamin, 'Bogus Mutiny Claims!', *Concord Times*, 6 August 2015, online at http://slconcordtimes.com/bogus-mutiny-claims/, accessed on 15/08/16; "Politico", 'Nine Soldiers Arrested at Teko Barracks in Makeni for Attempted Mutiny', *The Salone Monitor*, 20 August 2013, online at http://www.salonemonitor.net/nine-soldiers-arrested-at-teko-barracks-in-makeni-for-attempted-mutiny/, accessed on 15/08/16.

[79] Government of Sierra Leone, 'Defence White Paper: Informing the People' (Freetown, 2003), para 4001.

official prohibitions.[80] Equally, the RSLAF only had the capacity to man 32 of the 150 border crossing points.[81] Of his visits to the border during the 2003 tensions, Colonel Stadward later remarked that, 'There were times when I was extremely pleased when I had weapons with me'.[82] Although tensions along the Liberian border did later subside, they did not disappear. Brigadier Le Grys, for example, commented that although by 2006 the level of cross-border threat was 'Nothing untoward on any scale….it wouldn't have taken much to get it completely pear shaped'.[83] Thus, border security represented a genuine defence mission, but one for which the RSLAF was not well prepared.

Developing a credible military capability in the RSLAF proved a slow and painful process. Brigadier Freer, Commander IMATT in 2003, assessed Sierra Leone's neighbours as only capable of operating at company strength. He concluded that providing the RSLAF could 'seize and hold ground at company level' it would defeat or deter any cross-border threats and fulfil its defensive mission.[84] In 2003, Stadward felt the RSLAF 'were OK. They were better off when they were led by Brits than when they were led by Sierra Leoneans, 'cos the Sierra Leoneans don't really want to do it. It's a bit hard.'[85] Concerns were repeatedly raised in 2003 and 2004 that the RSLAF was unprepared to take over UNAMSIL's functions – which ultimately provided a guarantee of Sierra Leone's territorial integrity – as the UN mission drew down.[86] Indeed, UNAMSIL's final departure date was extended to allow the RSLAF more time to develop its own capabilities, in what one IMATT officer described as 'a big, big comfort blanket'.[87] By 2005, IMATT judged that section and platoon operations were about the limit of RSLAF capability; in part because shortages of communication equipment prevented effective manoeuvre in larger

[80] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: The State of Security and Governance', Africa Report No. 67 (Freetown/Brussels, 2 September 2003), pp. 3-6.
[81] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone After Elections: Politics as Usual?', Africa Report No. 49 (Freetown/Brussels, 12 July 2002), p. 10.
[82] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel (retd.) Jeremey Stadward, a senior British officer in IMATT 2001-3, conducted in Wiltshire on 8 September 2015.
[83] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*
[84] Interview with Major General Adrian Freer, *op. cit.*
[85] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Jeremey Stadward, *op. cit.*
[86] Brigadier Adrian Freer OBE, 'A Command and Leadership Lecture', delivered at the Myohaung Officers' Mess (04 April 2003), p. 2; International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone After Elections', *op. cit.*, p. 10; Jeremy Ginifer with Kaye Oliver, 'Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools: Sierra Leone', Department for International Development Evaluation Report EV 647 (London, March 2004), p. 14.
[87] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*

formations.[88] Equally though, collective training remained absent during much of the period, not least because Operation Pebu 'consumed the infantry component of the force'.[89] In 2006, Brigadier Le Grys nonetheless decided to move away from tactical mentoring. Le Grys felt that if 'you work at that tactical level whenever you walk away it looks messy, so actually, whilst you're there it looks OK and when you're not it isn't', and consequently 'if there was ever a conflict between accountability and capability…accountability came first and then the capability would just have to live with the shortfalls…Which is a bit frustrating in the field, but it just had to be.'[90]

By 2007, the RSLAF's operational capacity at the borders had not dramatically improved. Brigadier Cholerton remarked that 'notionally they could conduct a patrol, notionally they could erect a border post, but they didn't have the ability to do them effectively'. In part, this resulted from the RSLAF's institutional, logistical and financial limitations. Logistical resupply of units at the border was woeful, and in Cholerton's words, soldiers 'almost had to live off the land'; something which likely contributed to IMATT's suspicions that the RSLAF were involved in cross-border smuggling and illicit tax collection.[91] RSLAF border patrols were implicitly limited by the lack of vehicles, fuel, radios, rations and even maps required to mount anything but the most limited foot patrol.[92] Even these, however, Cholerton believed were only really conducted if IMATT were watching.[93] One British officer serving in a BAST shortly after the 2007 elections concluded that border operations 'fell down unless very quickly there was some form of constant supervision'. The BASTs conducted an annual audit of RSLAF units' military effectiveness, called Operation Evaluation, which included field exercises. The officer recalled that certain battalions could conduct an advance to contact at company level, but only in very simple conditions. As soon as the circumstances were varied unexpectedly, RSLAF units were out of their depth. Moreover, as units had prior warning of the exercise, their orders were all rehearsed in advance, such that a tactical

[88] Interview with Brigadier (retd.) David Santa-Olalla DSO MC, Commander IMATT 2005, conducted in London on 29 June 2015.
[89] Interview with Participant A11, a senior British officer in Sierra Leone in 2004, conducted in London on 24 July 2015.
[90] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*
[91] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[92] *Ibid.*; Interview with Participant A22, *op. cit.*
[93] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*

scenario involving advancing to find and destroy an unseen enemy position became 'a set piece'.[94] Cholerton concluded that the RSLAF could certainly not operate at battalion level, not least because most units were understrength and could not actually field a battalion.[95]

By 2008, however, the RSLAF was actively looking to deploy a company group on PSOs abroad. Sierra Leone had previously deployed troops on international missions before the Rebel War, and the ambition to redeploy on PSOs had emerged as an as early as 2003.[96] Albrecht and Haenlein have argued that although PSOs offered a source of remuneration for the RSLAF, the primary motive for deployments lay in Sierra Leone's history and identity. In particular, they argued that the country's receipt of significant international aid, including via various UN PSOs, generated a significant desire to "give back" to the international community. In so doing, Sierra Leone could retake its place on the international stage, and keep the RSLAF occupied with tasks unrelated to domestic politics.[97] IMATT officers did not dismiss such motives entirely, but were generally more cynical regarding the RSLAF's motives. Brigadier Le Grys noted that in 2006, there was significant debate about how best to approach PSOs, with RSLAF officers pushing for high-risk, high-status, high-reward options.[98] IMATT was more cautious, conscious that 'they would go to wherever they went taking our reputation with them…and our reputation as a training organisation…would have been on the line'.[99] One senior officer serving in IMATT as the RSLAF deployed to Darfur, observed that while the decision was largely a matter of principle for the President, it was one equally motivated by financial returns for the Defence Minister, and the RSLAF's command appeared to be predominantly interested in the pecuniary rewards to be had.[100] Another IMATT officer serving as the RSLAF later deployed to Somalia felt that 'They would spin it up as, "Oh, when we had our problems twelve years ago, our brothers from Africa came to help us…now it's our turn to go and help our

[94] Interview with Participant A22, *op. cit.*
[95] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[96] GOSL, 'Defence White Paper', para 1020; Interview with Major General Adrian Freer, *op. cit.*
[97] Albrecht & Haenlein, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-8.
[98] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*
[99] Interview with Brigadier David Santa-Olalla, *op. cit.*
[100] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*

brothers around Africa"', but at a personal level the financial returns proved far more animating.[101]

In 2009, the RSLAF deployed a Sector Reconnaissance Company to Darfur as part of UNAMID, and rotated a further four companies through the deployment until 2011.[102] The deployment was conducted under 'wet lease' arrangements, meaning Sierra Leone was entitled to reimbursement from the UN for equipment it purchased for the mission.[103] The deployment also provided a framework for injecting training and resources into the RSLAF. IMATT arranged for the purchase of "technical"-style pick-up trucks to support the company's mobility in theatre, and substantially funded the deployment. The US also provided support, with equipment delivered by the US firm PAE and pre-deployment training provided by the US State Department's ACOTA programme. Not only did this relive IMATT from the burden of funding the deployment alone, but ACOTA also offset IMATT's lack of first-had experience of (and access to) Darfur. Instead, IMATT supported the development of training facilities in Sierra Leone for the deployment, including construction of a Forward Operating Base for training purposes at Benguema.[104]

While pre-deployment preparations provided a much-need uplift in capability, the deployment itself was less successful. Equipment in theatre could not be maintained, and the RSLAF were entirely reliant on donors to move their troops and equipment to and from theatre.[105] This not only reflected a lack of RSLAF logistical and financial resources, but also the RSLAF's limited understanding of the requirements of PSOs. Operational planning visits to Darfur ahead of the deployment – of necessity conducted by RSLAF officers due to prohibitions on IMATT staff – proved inadequate. In one IMATT officer's words, 'intelligent men went there and made intelligent judgements, but there was a complete disconnect between our understanding of the world and Sudan and their understanding of what we were asking them to do in terms of logistic

[101] Interview with Participant A8, a senior British officer who served in Sierra Leone, conducted in Kent on 12 August 2015.
[102] Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence, 'RSLAF's Participation on Foreign Missions', online at http://www.mod.gov.sl/docs/RSLAF's_Participation_on_Foreign_Missions.pdf, accessed on 15/08/15.
[103] Albrecht & Haenlein, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
[104] *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30; Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[105] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*

and expeditionary planning'.[106] The vehicles IMATT had procured for the company also proved inadequate to the role and environment, limiting the RSLAF's utility in theatre.[107] Consequently, Colonel Martin, who took over as Commander IMATT as the Darfur deployment came to an end, found that the RSLAF presence in theatre 'gradually deteriorated to the point where I think they were pretty much combat ineffective. And it came as no surprise…when they were one of the first force elements to be dropped out of the UNAMID ORBAT as UNAMID downsized.'[108] While the RSLAF's performance in UNAMID was mixed, the experience was nonetheless invaluable, and simply deploying a formed unit on PSOs was a notable achievement.

In April 2013, a battalion strength contingent was deployed to the AMISOM force in Somalia, known as LEOBATT 1.[109] This deployment represented a significant step-up in terms of commitment and ambition. With LEOBATT 1 structured as a standard 850 strong light infantry battalion, around a tenth of the RSLAF's total manpower would be deployed. The RSLAF aimed to deploy several roulements, and so training for LEOBATT 2 began shortly after LEOBATT 1 deployed. This commitment ultimately envisaged one battalion deployed to Somalia, while another underwent training to relieve it and troops recently returned from Somalia went through a rest and reconstitution period. With each subsequent roulement, therefore, around a third of the RSLAF's land force would be continuously devoted to the mission at any one time.[110] Training for AMISOM was again provided by ACOTA, though IMATT ran an additional confirmatory exercise and arranged for STTTs from the British Army's team in Kenya to provide specialist training.[111] Although the confirmatory exercises the British ran were held at company level within a battalion framework,[112] Colonel Martin felt that at the point of deployment, LEOBATT 1 was capable of operating as a battalion.[113]

In theatre, however, LEOBATT 1 was not retained as a formed unit. Instead, the battalion was posted to the Kenyan sector and each of the rifle

[106] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[107] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[108] *Ibid.*
[109] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*
[110] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*; Albrecht & Haenlein, *op. cit*, p. 30.
[111] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[112] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*
[113] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*

companies assigned to a parent Kenyan unit.[114] This caused some upset in the RSLAF, largely because it meant that LEOBATT 1's battalion headquarters had no troops to command.[115] The Kenyan Defence Force was evidently unwilling to cede an independent battalion area to the RSLAF, which they viewed as an untested quantity, in part because the Kenyan deployment in AMISOM was heavily orientated to protecting the Kenyan border and national interests in southern Somalia.[116] Nonetheless, LEOBATT 1 performed well. Despite the demanding counter-insurgency role and the unit's lack of specialist counter-insurgency equipment, LEOBATT 1 gained a reputation for efficiency and aggressive action against Al Shebab militants. IMATT received favourable reports from Kenyan and AMISOM officers – some of whom were particularly surprised at the RSLAF's effectiveness, having themselves deployed to Sierra Leone under UNAMSIL during the Rebel War.[117] As one British officer commented, the RSLAF 'were there to make an impression, and they did.'[118] A LEOBATT soldier later remarked, 'we fought war, Kenya never did'.[119] At the least, the AMISOM deployment demonstrated the RSLAF's ability to effectively operate collectively at company group level during a complex operation – IMATT's original training target for border operations in 2003. Moreover, LEOBATT 1's performance – helped by their position as a West African military with little national interest in Somalia – allowed the RSLAF to successfully lobby for a greater role in AMISOM. LEOBATT 2 was awarded its own sector, with an RSLAF sector commander and responsibility for the port city of Kismayo. The increased responsibility attracted greater UN remuneration, and the additional complexity of urban operations was touted by IMATT as a sign of confidence in the RSLAF's military effectiveness.[120]

Although LEOBATT 1's deployment was conducted under 'dry lease', entitling it to greater support from AMISOM, the logistical issues which had plagued the RSLAF's Darfur deployment persisted.[121] The RSLAF still proved unable to resupply its forces abroad, and the RSLAF chose to pursue donors for

[114] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[115] Albrecht & Haenlein, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-6, fn. 61.
[116] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[117] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*
[118] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*
[119] Albrecht & Haenelin, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
[120] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*; Albrecht & Haenelin, *op. cit.,* p. 31.
[121] Albrecht & Haenelin, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

logistical aid over planning and resourcing its own solutions. Consequently, living conditions for LEOBATT 1 degraded significantly, and at one stage, the RSLAF's inability to provide effective logistical support led to emergency deals with other nations just to resupply LEOBATT 1 with ammunition. This situation was exacerbated by the outbreak of Ebola in Sierra Leone, which called into question the deployment of LEOBATT 2 to replace the in-country force. LEOBATT 1 became stranded in Somalia for an additional six months while GOSL, IMATT, AMISOM and Somali authorities negotiated the deployment of LEOBATT 2. This resulted in significant fatigue in LEOBATT 1, which had been in theatre for 18 months by the time it was withdrawn without replacement.[122] Although the RSLAF had demonstrated it could perform at company level on the ground, it remained reliant on external partners like IMATT to logistically resource its PSO deployments.

To a certain extent, IMATT officers considered that the RSLAF's new-found emphasis on PSOs reduced the RSLAF's operational effectiveness in the remainder of the force not deploying, detracting from its domestic role. Training for PSOs consumed the RSLAF's limited resource base, and still required significant injections from donors. Consequently, there was a significant drop in capacity across the remainder of the force. Colonel Martin observed very little training or activity among the rest of the RSLAF, while another senior British officer considered that PSOs caused an 'operational capability loss in all of the brigades and in the rural areas in particular. Their ability to do national security tasks, whilst they said they did them, I don't believe that they actually were able to do them to the level and competency that they would have been able to before'. Certainly, a high proportion of the fitter and more effective soldiers in the RSLAF were earmarked for PSOs.[123] This exacerbated the extant discrepancy between the RSLAF's capability and the demands of properly securing the border. Before the 2012 election, for example, Commander Seward counted 121 border crossing points in the north-east, only two of which were official and therefore manned.[124] One senior IMATT officer serving in Sierra Leone during the RSLAF's UNAMID deployment concluded that the

[122] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*; Albrecht & Haenelin, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
[123] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*; also Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*
[124] Interview with Commander (retd.) Sam Seward, IMATT Maritime Adviser 2000-2002 and UK Defence Attaché to Sierra Leone 2010-13, conducted in Devon on 30 October 2015.

revenue to be generated from PSOs marginalised all other RSLAF tasks: 'It was a bit like the toddlers' football game; everyone was chasing the ball'.[125]

However, the Darfur deployment did not detract from the RSLAF's capacity or willingness to support the 2012 presidential elections. During the elections, the RSLAF one again provided significant support to the SLP under MACP arrangements, deploying around 1,500 troops.[126] Despite the RSLAF's increasing neo-patrimonial tendencies, IMATT felt that the RSLAF behaved remarkably impartially during the election period. A year out from the vote, the CDS made a public statement warning the RSLAF that political campaigning would not be tolerated, and the few soldiers who were caught openly participating in political rallies were dismissed.[127] One IMATT officer even went so far as to suggest that the RSLAF's democratic conduct during the 2012 elections was reinforced by its newfound interest in PSOs:

> 'The 2012 elections demonstrated that the RSLAF was a reasonably safe organisation in the sense of apolitical, by and large, but ensuring that it was linked into a national vision of a expeditionary capability was probably a good thing, and certainly the party in power made that connection'.[128]

The RSLAF's good conduct was taken as confirmation of the progress made in the RSLAF's attitudes. The 2012 elections thus became a significant enabling factor in the replacement of IMATT with ISAT in 2013.[129]

However, the continuing neo-patrimonial character of Sierra Leonean elections threatened to draw the RSLAF back into domestic politics. The 2007 elections had highlighted the political polarisation of Sierra Leone along ethnic and geographic lines.[130] Subsequent local council, chieftaincy and by-elections held in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 were all marred by violence between the

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[125] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[126] 'Q&A: Sierra Leone General Elections', *BBC News*, 14 November 2012, online at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20302544, accessed on 15/08/16.
[127] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[128] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*
[129] Interview with Commander Sam Seward, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*
[130] Africa Research Institute, 'Old Tricks, Young Guns: Elections and Violence in Sierra Leone', Briefing Note 1102 (London, April 2011), p.3, online at http://africaresearchinstitute.org/files/briefing-notes/docs/Old-Tricks-Young-Guns-Elections-and-violence-in-Sierra-Leone-22ZK27SBXD.pdf, accessed on 15/08/16; 'Political Analysis: How We Voted in 2007 & 2008: The Ethnic and Regional Voting Pattern in Sierra Leone', *Awoko News*, n.d., online at http://awoko.org/2012/09/20/political-analysis-how-we-voted-in-2007-2008-the-ethnic-and-regional-voting-pattern-in-sierra-leone/, accessed on 15/08/16.

SLPP and APC.[131] In July 2011, the SLPP elected Julius Bio as their presidential candidate, himself a former NPRC junta leader, prompting fears that Sierra Leone's political past might destabilise its democratic future.[132] Various stand-off's occurred during run-up to the 2012 elections. On 3 October 2011, a government minister was threatened by crowds in Kono, resulting in his security detail shooting three people.[133] Less than a week later, Bio was stoned by an APC mob in Bo, resulting in SLPP supporters rioting and burning down the local APC headquarters.[134] On 22 September, a ban on political party rallies was announced, though its legality was contested. A by-election in January 2012 returned an SLPP MP, who was promptly arrested and charged with attempted kidnapping.[135] President Koroma subsequently made overtures to leading SLPP politicians, resulting in three prominent defections.[136] Tensions between the two party nominees reached a head on 12 October 2012, when Bio's convoy refused to give way to President Koroma's motorcade in Freetown.[137]

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[131] Freedom House, 'Sierra Leone: 2012', online at https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2012/sierra-leone, accessed on 15/08/16; Africa Research Institute, 'Old Tricks, Young Guns', *op. cit.*; Department for International Development, 'Elections in Sierra Leone in 2007 and 2008' (London, 2008), online at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67647/elections-sl-2007-2008.pdf, accessed on 02/08/16.

[132] An inquest was called for to examine the execution of 21 people following the NPRC take-over in 1992, but did not ultimately take place. The prospect did lead to a public dispute between Koroma and the UN Representative in Sierra Leone, who viewed such an inquiry as a political weapon. He was subsequently recalled, claiming he had been forced from office by President Koroma. See Simon Akam, 'Sierra Leone President Forced Out U.N. Envoy: Letter', *Reuters*, online at http://www.reuters.com/article/us-sierraleone-un-envoy-idUSTRE81C27420120213, accessed on 15/08/16; Democracy in Africa, 'Elections and Violence in Sierra Leone', online at http://democracyinafrica.org/elections-and-violence-in-sierra-leone/, accessed on 15/08/16; Security Council Report, 'Sierra Leone: March 2012 Monthly Forecast', online at http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2012-03/lookup_c_glKWLeMTIsG_b_7996429.php, accessed on 15/08/16.

[133] Government of Sierra Leone, 'Press Release: Investigation Reports on the Disturbances in Kono and Bo', 5 October 2011, online at http://www.statehouse.gov.sl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=422:-press-release-investigation-reports-on-the-disturbances-in-kono-and-bo&catid=34:news-articles, accessed on 15/08/16.

[134] 'Mada Bio Rejects Medical Report in Sierra Leone and says "I going to Ghana for treatment"', *Standard Times Press Newspaper*, online at http://standardtimespress.org/?p=787, accessed on 15/08/16; Government of Sierra Leone, 'Press Release: Investigation Reports on the Disturbances in Kono and Bo', *op. cit.*

[135] Security Council Report, 'Sierra Leone: March 2012 Monthly Forecast', *op. cit.*

[136] 'Kailahun District Chairman Defects to APC', *Awoko News*, online at http://awoko.org/2012/03/13/kailahun-district-chairman-defects-to-apc/, accessed on 15/08/16; Freedom House, 'Sierra Leone: 2012', *op. cit.*; Abdul R. Thomas, 'Yet Another Return of Political Violence in Freetown', *Sierra Leone Telegraph*, online at http://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/?p=817, accessed on 15/08/16.

[137] 'Q&A: Sierra Leone General Elections', *BBC News*, *op. cit.*

IMATT became concerned that the November 2012 elections might entail significant violence. Specialists from the UK conducted contingency planning to ensure the security of deployed UK personnel,[138] and IMATT was reinforced by a team of 35 Royal Marines and loan service personnel from neighbouring countries. These were used as a surge capacity to reinsert British military observers into RSLAF brigade and unit headquarters; providing direct advice and increased situational awareness for Commander IMATT. In the run-up to the 2012 elections, known SLPP army officers were closely monitored,[139] and allegations emerged in the months after the elections that the Minister of Defence was inappropriately conniving to remove one pro-SLPP brigadier.[140] However, as one IMATT officer shrewdly observed, RSLAF officers knew that whichever candidate was elected, he would exercise significant influence over senior appointments, and so showed little inclination to "stick their head above the parapet".[141] Nonetheless, as in 2007, a number of critical incidents were only contained by IMATT's intervention. Colonel Martin recalled how some uncounted ballot boxes were discovered after the election in Bo, an SLPP dominated area, leading to allegations of vote rigging and a riot:

> 'The police folded very quickly, didn't put up any resistance, you know, didn't try and impose any order, and it was the RSLAF – actually to be quite honest it was an IMATT lieutenant colonel with his driver, and a couple of other guys, who pretty much stemmed the mob – and then the RSLAF took control.'[142]

Martin did note, however, that the RSLAF handed control back over to the SLP as soon as possible. The British Defence Attaché at the time, Commander Seward, concluded that such incidents reflected the incapacity of the SLP as much as the military.[143]

Concerns that PSOs would prevent the RSLAF from contributing effectively to domestic national security tasks also proved unfounded during the Ebola crisis. The first case of Ebola was confirmed in Sierra Leone on 24 May 2014, having appeared in neighbouring Guinea the previous month. While Ebola cut short the RSLAF's role in AMISOM, the commitments made to troop readiness in preparation for that deployment paid dividends during the resulting

[138] Interview with Commander Sam Seward, *op. cit.*
[139] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[140] 'Brig. Mondeh and Paolo Conteh: What happened?', *Standard Times Press Newspaper*, *op. cit.*
[141] Interview with Participant A18, *op. cit.*
[142] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[143] Interview with Commander Sam Seward, *op. cit.*

domestic emergency. The end of the AMISOM deployment left LEOBATT 2 without a task, but as the Ebola pandemic in Sierra Leone deepened, it was re-rolled as an emergency reserve to support the British military surge in Sierra Leone. LEOBATT 2 was trained in the use of personal protective equipment, and subsequently spearheaded the RSLAF's efforts to combat Ebola. LEOBATT 2 soldiers were used to provide extra security at Lungi International Airport. They provided both security and administrative support at Ebola hospitals, including the disposal of waste. LEOBATT 2 drivers were used to ferry blood samples to testing labs, and the unit also provided a quick reaction force, which helped establish checkpoints and quarantine zones. Many of these tasks were subsequently taken over by regular RSLAF units, which took longer to mobilise. The RSLAF also provided extensive support to the SLP, particularly in manning roadblocks, checkpoints, and quarantine lines around infected households. The RSLAF's standing border security task also increased in salience, as efforts to prevent cross-border transmission became important.[144]

In comparison to virtually every other agent of the Sierra Leonean state, the RSLAF proved remarkably durable during the Ebola crisis. British officers felt that the RSLAF proved better at logistically supporting its soldiers deployed on checkpoints and quarantine tasks than the SLP, noting that constables frequently abandoned posts to try and feed themselves.[145] British civilians working up-country, however, found that the RSLAF's logistical superiority did not extend far beyond Freetown.[146] Nonetheless, the RSLAF worked full in the knowledge that donor aid for Ebola relief would have little direct military benefit:

> 'They weren't financially driven, and [in] a lot of the other departments it was all about getting the resources, getting the international aid. The RSLAF knew that no-one was going to pay for new uniforms for them, not going to buy them new vehicles…Aid money would never do that…but nonetheless they were still out there using up their resources, using up their soldiers, and getting on with it.'[147]

Equally, the RSLAF did not experience discipline problems among its soldiers or medics during the Ebola response, in stark contrast to Ministry of Health

[144] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*
[145] *Ibid.*; see also Ashlee Godwin & Cathy Haenlein, 'Learning From Ebola in Sierra Leone', *RUSI Newsbrief*, 26 January 2015, online at https://rusi.org/publication/newsbrief/learning-ebola-sierra-leone, accessed 27/06/16..
[146] Interview with Participant A25, *op. cit*
[147] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*

employees.[148] In comparison to the rather more pecuniary motives exhibited by the RSLAF during PSOs, the military's commitment to the Ebola response should thus be characterised as one of national service. The RSLAF was subsequently lauded both domestically and internationally for its conduct during the Ebola pandemic.[149]

While the RSLAF performed credibly during the Ebola outbreak, the pandemic highlighted the continuing political infighting over ownership of the country's security apparatus. Given the pathogenic nature of the threat, responsibility for its management was initially given to the Ministry of Health. However, the ministry imperfectly appreciated the wider national security aspects of the crisis, and proved insufficiently robust to deal with the spiralling epidemic, leading to a virtual collapse of the country's public health institutions.[150] The initial decision to treat the situation as a Ministry of Health matter bypassed the Office of National Security (ONS), which had been established specifically to co-ordinate nationwide security responses. Although the ONS did not have sufficient capabilities to manage the crisis alone, it did contain personnel trained in disaster response.[151] Eventually, President Koroma sacked his Health Minister and appointed Paolo Conteh, the Defence Minister, to head a new National Ebola Response Centre (NERC).[152] The creation of the NERC continued to side-line the ONS, especially given that the NERC

[148] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*; 'Health Workers Strike at Southern Sierra Leone's only Ebola Clinic', *Reuters*, 12 November 2014, online at http://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-ebola-leone-idUSKCN0IW1I820141112, accessed on 15/08/16; 'Ebola Outbreak: Sierra Leone Workers Dump Bodies in Kenema', *BBC News*, online at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-30191938, accessed on 15/08/16.

[149] Godwin & Haenlein, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*; 'In Pictures: See How President Koroma Honoured Ebola Warriors In Sierra Leone', *Sierra Loaded News*, n.d., online at http://www.sierraloaded.com/president-koroma-honours-ebola-warriors/, accessed on 15/08/16.

[150] Farouk Chothia, 'Ebola Drains Already Weak West African Health System', *BBC News*, 24 September 2014, online at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-29324595, accessed on 15/08/16.

[151] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*

[152] Bryan Randall, 'Paolo Conteh Calls for Change of Attitude to Defeat Ebola', *Awareness Times*, 30 October 2014, online at http://news.sl/drwebsite/publish/article_200526530.shtml, accessed on 15/08/16; Kingsley Ighobor, 'Ebola: A Bumpy Road to Zero Transmission', *UN Africa Renewal Online Magazine*, April 2015, online at http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2015/ebola-bumpy-road-zero-transmission, accessed on 15/08/16; 'Sierra Leone Health Chief Fired over Handling of Ebola', *ITV News Online*, 29 August 2014, online at http://www.itv.com/news/update/2014-08-29/sierra-leone-health-chief-fired-over-handling-of-ebola/, accessed on 15/08/16; 'Health Minister Miatta Kargbo Mocks Nurse who Died of Ebola', *Awareness Times*, 18 June 2014, online at http://news.sl/drwebsite/publish/article_200525604.shtml, accessed on 15/08/16; 'Health minister Miatta Kargbo Sacked', *Sierra Leone Telegraph*, 29 August 2014, online at http://www.thesierraleonetelegraph.com/?p=7208, accessed on 15/08/16.

effectively created parallel provincial and district co-ordination mechanisms which duplicated those already established in the ONS structure.[153]

The politics of Sierra Leone's initial Ebola response reflect more than an underestimation of the impending crisis. They are symptomatic of political infighting within the senior ranks of the APC government. The ONS, which had been created by the British under President Kabbah's tenure, was perceived as an SLPP institution and therefore not trusted.[154] Moreover, the ONS reported to the Vice President, whose relationship with President Koroma had publically deteriorated. Vice President Sumana had been accused of attempting to form a breakaway movement from the APC, eventually leading to his expulsion from the party.[155] During the Ebola crisis, these tensions came to a head after Sumana quarantined himself in his residence following the death of one of his security detail from the virus.[156] The RSLAF was subsequently drawn into the fracas by deploying to enforce an Ebola cordon, simultaneously disarming Sumana's security detail. Sumana subsequently fled to the US Embassy, claiming his life was in danger, and was swiftly removed from office by President Koroma.[157] The RSLAF's role in the incident raises questions about the military's susceptibility to domestic party political intrigue, regardless of its own civil-military integrity. Equally, while the security response to Ebola was undoubtedly helped by the appointment of Paulo Conteh to head the NERC, the fact that the politician who replaced him was appointed as a Deputy Minister rather than a full Minister (a portfolio which reverted back to President Koroma), suggests that civil-military change at the political level was reliant on a small

[153] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A25, *op. cit.*
[154] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*
[155] Philip Neville, 'Vice President Sam Sumana, APC Politics and Ingratitude', *Standard Times Press Newspaper*, n.d., online at http://standardtimespress.org/?p=1202, accessed on 15/08/16.
[156] 'Sierra Leone Vice President Places Himself in Ebola Quarantine', *Reuters*, 28 February 2015, online at http://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-ebola-leone-idUSKBN0LW0WQ20150228, accessed on 15/08/16.
[157] 'Sierra Leone VP Samuel Sam-Sumana "Goes Into Hiding"', *BBC News*, 14 March 2015, online at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-31885713, accessed on 15/08/16; 'Sierra Leone VP Samuel Sam-Sumana Sacked', *BBC News*, 18 March 2015, online at http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-31941025, accessed on 15/08/16; 'Sierra Leone's Vice President asks U.S. for Asylum: "I Don't Feel Safe"', *The Washington Times*, online at http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/mar/14/samuel-sam-sumana-sierra-leones-vice-president-ask/, accessed on 15/08/16.

number of individuals rather than a more systemic change in Sierra Leonean political culture, as Albrecht and Jackson suggest.[158]

Effectiveness and Accountability in the RSLAF

As IMATT downsized, normative British influence over RSLAF officers' behaviour diminished. This saw a partial roll-back of Plan 2010's institutional mechanisms for effecting generational change, accompanied by reduced normative socialisation of IMATT's new generation of RSLAF officers, resulting in a resurgence of neo-patrimonial practices and a partial re-politicisation of the military. To a certain extent, this was limited by continued British oversight at critical junctures. Albrecht and Jackson have consequently argued that Plan 2010 failed to provide a sustainable mechanism for normative SSR in the RSLAF, being overly reliant on the presence of IMATT officers and a select few Sierra Leonean elites. The pair concluded that IMATT's withdrawal, and democratic political change, rendered both mechanisms unsustainable.[159] Yet, at the same time, the RSLAF began to deploy troops on PSOs. Although not universally successful, these PSO deployments did demonstrate an increase in the RSLAF's tangible operational output, and the eventual realisation of IMATT's goal of producing an RSLAF capable of operating effectively at sub-unit level. Moreover, the RSLAF's new-found operational role, increased revenue, and improved military effectiveness did not lead to a crisis of domestic civil-military relations. Nor did it lead to a reduction in the RSLAF's capacity in times of domestic national emergency, as seen during the 2012 election cycle and the Ebola pandemic. How then can these two apparently contradictory trends be explained?

Albrecht and Haenlein have argued that the RSLAF's reorientation to PSOs provided an external locus of identity, which helped underpin democratic civil-military relations domestically. Not only did this provide a tangible task to occupy and financially sustain the military, but it was one fundamentally separate from domestic politics. For Albrecht and Haenlein, the benefits of PSOs on the RSLAF were primarily about the role's contribution to 'military

[158] Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence, 'Deputy Minister of Defence of the Ministry of Defence Sierra Leone', online at http://www.mod.gov.sl/aboutus-deputy-minister.html, accessed on 15/08/16; 'President Koroma's Cabinet: 13 March 2016 to Present', *Sierra Leone Web*, online at http://www.sierra-leone.org/cabinet.html, accessed on 15/08/16.
[159] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*

identity generation'.[160] The pair concluded that 'contributing to peacekeeping has…given the force a keen sense of purpose. Removing this sense of direction could have profound political implications if it is not replaced with and equally meaningful focus',[161] potentially leading 'to a crisis of identity' in the RSLAF.[162] This relationship between military identity and operational output was observed by number of British advisers in Sierra Leone. One British officer, serving as the RSLAF was deployed to Somalia, argued that:

> 'If you're actually part of an organisation that is delivering what it's supposed to do and you're part of that, that's quite a powerful thing. And so a combination of a common heritage and an understanding of what a military looks like and how it behaves, combined with just the everyday practicalities of being a soldier, is quite powerful.'

He concluded that PSOs 'gave them a focus which became extremely powerful and almost self-fulfilling. You trained in order to deploy, and through doing that you generated capacity and capability that wouldn't be there otherwise.'[163]

Yet, as these observations attest, participation in PSOs only reinforced the RSLAF's existing martial identity, which was itself a product of its heritage. IMATT had actively sought to develop this identity throughout its reform programme. In 2003, for example, Colonel Stack noted how IMATT training programmes sought to develop unit cohesion through inter-unit competitions.[164] Courses at the Horton Academy also emphasised the RSLAF's history through functions at the RSLAF's Myohaung Mess.[165] This had been the officers' mess of the RSLAF's British colonial predecessor, and proudly retained the Colours of its antecedent regiments.[166] Indeed, the RSLAF remained extremely proud of Sierra Leone's military contribution to the British effort in Burma during the Second World War.[167] The Royal West African Frontier Force, which included a Sierra Leonean battalion, was awarded four battle honours for its role in the Burma campaign, including Myohaung, which the RSLAF celebrated annually

[160] Albrecht & Haenlein, *op. cit.*, p. 26
[161] *Ibid.*, p. 32
[162] *Ibid.*, p. 33
[163] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*
[164] Interview with Colonel (retd.) Philip Stack, IMATT officer serving as the RSLAF Deputy Joint Force Commander in 2004, conducted in Bath on 17 August 2015.
[165] Interview with Participant A11, *op. cit.*
[166] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*
[167] Interview with Participant A17, *op. cit.*; Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*; Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*

on 24 January as Myohaung Day.[168] Brigadier Le Grys was keen not to overstate the influence of the trappings of mess life on the RSLAF, noting that conditions up-country were significantly less civilised. Nonetheless, even here social rituals still appeared to reinforce the military community's identity, like the use of military vehicles to transport service families, decked out in their best attire, to church or mosque.[169] Indeed, much of IMATT's activity in the RSLAF prior to PSOs was focused on normative behavioural change, primarily through fostering a new professional military identity.

That said, participation in PSOs did reinforce the gradual improvements seen in the RSLAF's public reputation. As one IMATT officer observed, 'one should not underestimate the psychological importance of that demonstrable external role, both of the army's vision of itself and the nation's vision of its army'.[170] In 2003, for example, the GOSL Security Sector Review identified an understandable public perception that threats to stability in Sierra Leone were primarily internal, and substantially related to the military itself.[171] Studies the following year found that while perceptions of the RSLAF were improving in Freetown, they remained poor in the rural areas, and the SLP was generally held in higher regard.[172] By 2006, public opinions of the RSLAF were more positive, with 65 per cent of respondents in one urban perception study now believing that the RSLAF was very important to their personal security.[173] A parallel study conducted in early 2008 found that citizens' security concerns were now overwhelmingly focused on issues of criminality and under-development rather than security force abuses.[174] By 2011, a perception study in Freetown found that negative views of the RSLAF were notable by their

[168] Andrew Stewart, 'An Enduring Commitment: The British Military's Role in Sierra Leone', *Defence Studies*, 8:3 (2008), pp. 351-9; Colonel Mike Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief 2002', IMATT internal briefing document (Shrewsbury, 24 July 2002), pp. 7-8; Brigadier F. A. S. Clarke, 'The Story of the Royal West African Frontier Force', RUSI Journal, 97:586 (1952), pp. 223-229.
[169] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*
[170] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*
[171] Peter J. Middlebrook & Sharon M. Miller, 'Sierra Leone Security Sector Expenditure Review', Consultancy report prepared for the Department for International Development Sierra Leone Country Office (Lewes, DE, September 2006), p. 12.
[172] Public Sector Reform Unit, 'Management and Functional Review of the Ministry of Defence' (2004), p. 41; Ginifer with Oliver, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-18
[173] Judy Smith-Hoehn, 'Public Perceptions of Security in Post-Conflict Urban Liberia and Sierra Leone: Part II – The Aftermath of Withdrawal in Sierra Leone', *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 3:2 (2007), pp. 91-3.
[174] Albrecht & Jackson, *Security System Transformation*, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-96.

absence.[175] As one IMATT officer commented, 'the fact that the RSLAF was able to…deliver an effective expeditionary capability reinforced its credibility both nationally and internationally, and the national part's quite important; it was seen as an effective institution, and was regularly reported as such locally, and that's quite a big deal given its history'.[176]

Yet here, again, it difficult to separate the impact of PSOs in changing the RSLAF's reputation from the wider impact of earlier, IMATT-led reforms. Under IMATT guidance, the RSLAF had worked hard to rehabilitate its image among the population, even before the reputational benefits of PSOs. It adopted the slogan "a force for good", and regularly conducted unarmed parades through Freetown, during which disciplined, unarmed soldiers would jog in formation through the streets, wearing white vests and singing. IMATT believed such activities were a useful 'way of getting to the people and saying "This is your army and this is what we can do for you"' and were well received by the public.[177] IMATT itself also engaged in "civil-military co-operation" (CIMIC) projects, with the aim of improving relations with communities around RSLAF bases. Typically, these supported local initiatives by developing infrastructure. In 2008, for example, IMATT supported 3 Brigade RSLAF to refurbish local markets in Kenema and Kuiva, established a local women's sewing school, and supported a blacksmith's forge staffed by polio victims.[178] The brigade also hosted a football tournament in Kailahun with local teams.[179]

Consequently, separating out the impact of PSOs in normative identity generation from IMATT's earlier socialisation activities appears deeply problematic. This is particularly so, as that the RSLAF's martial identity was not always conducive to operational effectiveness, given the force's low resource

[175] Conciliation Resources, 'People's Perspectives on Instability in West Africa', Conciliation Resources & Saferworld People's Peacemaking Perspectives project (March 2012), online at http://www.c-r.org/downloads/PPP_instability_WestAfrica.pdf, accessed on 15/08/16.
[176] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*
[177] Interview with Participant A18, *op. cit.*; IMATT, 'Visit of Comd IMATT(SL)', unpublished IMATT briefing presentation (31 January 2008).
[178] Interview with Participant A22, *op. cit.*; IMATT, 'Visit of Comd IMATT(SL)', *op. cit.*
[179] Rosalind Hanson-Alp, 'Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone, 1997-2007: Civil Society's Role in Sierra Leone's Security Sector Reform Process Experiences from Conciliation resources' West Africa Programme', in Paul Jackson & Peter Albrecht (eds.), 'Security System Transformation in Sierra Leone 1997-2007: Working Paper Series' (October 2008), pp. 12-3, online at http://www.c-r.org/downloads/SecuritySystemTransformation_WorkingPaper_200810_ENG.pdf, accessed on 15/08/16.

base. For example, the RSLAF maintained a military marching band, of which they were extremely proud. As Colonel Martin recalled, 'They were very proud of their uniforms, and they would happily spend more money on uniforms than other stuff.'[180] Although IMATT did eventually facilitate the donation of second-hand instruments from the British Army to the band, and provided some military band training, the pride the RSLAF derived from its band was sometimes problematic for sound financial decision-making. As one IMATT officer serving in 2004, recalled:

> 'At times band uniforms were coming higher than things to run the force...I did accompany [Brigadier] Porter and [CDS] Sam M'boma to a meeting with the IMF to discuss how we were moving forward and what funding we needed, and I got dug in the ribs by Sam M'boma saying "What about our band uniforms?" "I don't think the IMF are interested!" That was the sort of thing that went on'.[181]

Nonetheless, PSOs do appear to have helped arrest neo-patrimonial trends in the RSLAF. Instead of generating a unique identity centred on peacekeeping, this can be attributed to – in principle – the importance of resources generated from PSOs, and – in practice – the relationship between military effectiveness on operations, and accountability in those intuitional processes which also underpinned RSLAF political neutrality.

In principle, PSOs provided an opportunity for the RSLAF to establish an external resource base with which to maintain itself. The reimbursement provided by the UN or African Union (AU) is designed to offset the costs of deploying troops on a PSO, but is typically greater than the costs borne by a small military. On the one hand, it can reasonably be argued that the RSLAF's shift to PSOs might be problematic for democratic civil-military accountability. By providing an external source of funding, PSOs potentially provided the RSLAF with a means of evading GOSL control by increasing the RSLAF's independence from civilian-controlled tax revenues. The RSLAF did eventually downsize, but as Brima Sesay, the RSLAF Joint Force Commander in 2013 noted, without PSOs 'the shock [of downsizing] would have been difficult to accept'.[182] On the other hand, the APC government showed little inclination to increase defence spending, and even after downsizing, the RSLAF lacked

[180] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[181] Interview with Participant A16, *op. cit.*
[182] Quoted in Albrecht & Haenlein, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

sufficient resources to keep the military functioning – something which had been a significant factor in a number of previous RSLMF coups.

Undoubtedly, the RSLAF was in chronic need of additional funding to maintain the institutional developments undertaken since the Rebel War. By 2007, the RSLAF's resource shortage had become sufficiently critical that virtually no routine training could occur without IMATT support. IMATT supported the training of recruits as well as line units, maintained the RSLAF's training infrastructure, and even provided the majority of training ammunition.[183] As one IMATT officer observed, 'a military will stagnate unless you continue to put resource into it'. By 2012, the RSLAF's unit rotation between training and border operations 'had pretty much broken, and that was a function of lack of state resource being put into the RSLAF, 'cos it wasn't seen as a priority by government. Whilst that might be a legitimate political choice, the consequence on the military is quite profound.'[184] The RSLAF's lack of resources necessitated significant donor investment to train the RSLAF to a point where it could meet peacekeeping deployment standards. Colonel Martin was obliged to pay for rations and fuel to facilitate the training of LEOBATT 1, because the Bank of Sierra Leone was so insolvent that it was frequently unable to release the MOD's allocated funds to the RSLAF on time.[185]

In practice, however, the RSLAF found it difficult to use PSOs as a vehicle for sustainably investing in the force. For the first UNAMID deployment, GOSL received a standard UN/AU rate of US$1028 per deployed soldier, per month, in reimbursement. In 2008, IMATT spent considerable time working up costings to ensure that the RSLAF would be able to use these funds to sustain the training and deployment costs of future roulements. The expectation was that as future companies rotated through the deployment, the training benefits would cascade throughout the force. Any remaining capital would be used to pay an operational allowance to soldiers deploying on the operation. IMATT suggested that a daily rate of around $5 per soldier – i.e. $150 a month – would allow permit sufficient reinvestment to sustain the deployment. In the event, however, the RSLAF decided to pay each soldier an allowance of US$15 per

[183] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[184] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*
[185] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*

day – $450 a month – which, in the words of one IMATT officer, 'blew it [the funding model] out of the water' and 'squandered' the RSLAF's opportunity to invest in its training and institutional fabric.[186] This dynamic became worse during the AMISOM deployment. Although the RSLAF received the same US$1028 monthly rate per head in reimbursement, it only retained $200 per head a month, passing on the remaining $828 to individual soldiers.[187] Although IMATT officers believed that the RSLAF might still financially sustain the deployment, this large allowance precluded significant reinvestment in RSLAF equipment, training and infrastructure. Instead, the RSLAF chose to rely on the assumption of future donor aid, accounting for the poor RSLAF logistical support during the AMISOM deployment. As one British officer commented, the 'mentality of reinvestment was not there'.[188] This mentality extended to wider defence planning. For example, in order to facilitate the AMISOM deployment, IMATT arranged to train RSLAF machine gun instructors. However, the RSLAF decided to deploy these as part of LEOBATT 1, meaning no instructors were available to train LEOBATT 2. When LEOBATT 1 was eventually recovered, the RSLAF did not post the instructors to the training school in readiness to train a potential future LEOBATT 3, but instead returned them to their units.[189]

Nonetheless, the fact that deploying on PSOs entailed significant sums of money – both for the RSLAF and the individual soldiers concerned – introduced a significant necessity for accountability into the exercise. RSLAF soldiers on PSOs could expect to make around ten times their annual salary in one deployment through operational allowances; as one IMATT officer remarked, this was a 'fundamentally life-changing' sum.[190] Consequently, soldiers continually agitated about the proportion of reimbursement retained by the RSLAF, under the perception that it was inevitably being corruptly used. This resulted in repeated explanations from the RSLAF and IMATT that the funds were being used to provide equipment, rations and training for LEOBATT 2, and to offset those costs for LEOBATT 1. The RSLAF even publically

[186] Albrecht & Haenlein, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[187] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*; Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*; Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence, 'The Purpose of Deducting USD 200 from Allowances of Troops on Foreign Peacekeeping Mission in Somalia', online at http://www.mod.gov.sl/docs/Purpose_of_USD_200_Deductions_fm_RSLAF_PK_Troops.pdf, accessed on 15/08/16.
[188] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*
[189] *Ibid.*
[190] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*

published its policies regarding reimbursement.[191] IMATT also ensured that reimbursement funds went into a dedicated PSO account, with proper safeguards over its use.[192] This did not prevent patronage and corruption during procurement processes, but the process of providing operational allowances did provide public scrutiny of, and a degree of accountability in, the RSLAF's handling of PSO reimbursements.

Similar concerns also shaped how the RSLAF selected soldiers for PSOs. The initial UNAMID deployment was based around the RSLAF's Force Reconnaissance Unit (FRU). This company-sized organisation had been established by IMATT some years previously as a special force for the RSLAF, intended for military reconnaissance tasks. It was provided with a higher level of training, an embedded IMATT advisor, and was held as a national reserve in Freetown. Nominally, a selection process was run to select volunteers from the wider military for service with the FRU. Subsequently, the FRU 'all grew moustaches…and they all got hold of slightly different combats'.[193] IMATT officers considered the FRU to be relatively capable; as Brigadier Cholerton remarked, 'we invested quite heavily in…the FRU trying to make them better as a potential deployable unit'.[194] However, the lure of operational allowances brought out the worst patrimonial tendencies in the RSLAF. As one IMATT officer found:

> 'they wholesale ransacked the C2 structure of the FRU…Again, it comes down to patronage…You'd see senior staff car driver, lance corporal, suddenly ends up being a section 2ic. Absolute nonsense through and through…at every moment somebody was being smuggled onto the ORBAT. Guys who were inappropriately qualified being put into the mechanics posts. It fundamentally undermined the whole process.'[195]

However, the external scrutiny required by the UN to deploy on UN-sponsored operations also provided IMATT with a means of curbing the worst excesses of the RSLAF's neo-patrimonial behaviours. While IMATT was unable to prevent FRU soldiers being substituted with senior RSLAF officers' "little men", the UN inspection process did require the RSLAF to demonstrate that all deploying soldiers met minimum standards of training and effectiveness. This involved UN

[191] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*; Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence, 'The Purpose of Deducting USD 200', *op. cit.*
[192] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*
[193] Interview with Brigadier Barry Le Grys, *op. cit.*
[194] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*
[195] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*

audits of both training standards and physical equipment, and required the RSLAF to meet two consecutive benchmarks in order to be recognised first as suitable for deployment, and then actually fit to deploy. As the same officer recalled, 'We used the UN test process…as the stick with which to beat them'.[196] Nonetheless, changes were still being made up until the unit deployed, such that some individuals 'hadn't conducted any training and then were then taken into theatre as a brazen liability'.[197]

However, when the RSLAF began to establish LEOBATT 1 for AMISOM, it took a fundamentally different approach. The UNAMID deployment was recognised, at least by IMATT, as less than totally successful. Equally, a degree of resentment had developed among the RSLAF because the financial benefits of the UNAMID deployment had been largely confined to the FRU. For the Somalia deployment, therefore, the RSLAF decided not to base LEOBATT around an existing unit, but to form a composite battalion selected from across the RSLAF.[198] There was still a degree of patronage in selections for LEOBATT 1. Although selection boards were held to select officers, one IMATT officer involved in the process stated that 'it was very much…for the officers, muggins' turn'.[199] Soldiers were nominated for LEOBATT from each battalion, but Colonel Martin similarly suspected that 'battalion commanding officers [were] putting forward their preferred, chosen men. We were never able to drill down into that level of detail'.[200] Nonetheless, the CDS was determined to ensure the LEOBATT 1 fairly represented the demographics of the force, and did not disproportionately favour any ethnic or regional group. He personally scrutinised the nominal roll for LEOBATT 1 name by name; an oversight exercise which ended up delaying the initial deployment.[201]

For LEOBATT 2, which was also formed as a composite unit, the selection process became more formalised and meritocratic, at least overtly. The RSLAF published guidelines for selecting soldiers for deployment on PSOs. Although RSLAF units were still allocated a quota of soldiers to appoint to LEOBATT 2, the RSLAF formally highlighted additional selection mechanisms

[196] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[197] *Ibid.*
[198] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[199] Interview with Participant A18, *op. cit.*
[200] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*
[201] *Ibid.*

in place once nominees arrived at the Peace Mission Training Centre at Hastings Battle Camp. These included fitness, educational and medical screenings, as well as field training exercises.[202] While the RSLAF's published criteria remained somewhat vague, British officers continued to oversee the process: 'while we didn't put our fingers in the mangle doing the physical selection, we tried to sit on the fringes and act as that honest broker'.[203] There remained a significant degree of nepotism in the selection process for LEOBATT 2, and as another British officer supervising the process remarked, 'there were undoubtedly individuals who got selected on the basis of patronage'.[204] However, the RSLAF also recognised that the process had to be perceived as transparent and fair to avoid wider schisms within the military. As one British officer noted, the perception of patrimonial selection created significant anger among RSLAF soldiers, played out through 'barrack room lawyers and internet chat, and that sort of thing of disgruntled soldiers'.[205] In consequence, the deliberate efforts to ensure tribal and regional balance, together with publication of selection processes, represented an overt attempt to approach the process in an open and transparent fashion.[206] As with the UNAMID deployment, this accountability was reinforced by the UN's inspection process, augmented by ACOTA training and a British-led test exercise.

The experience of deploying on PSOs had a wider beneficial impact on accountability in the RSLAF's broader institutional processes. The need to ensure that RSLAF units deploying on PSOs met the UN's standards provided IMATT with 'opportunities to go back into business that we had perhaps become less familiar with' as IMATT had downsized. As one senior IMATT officer supporting the UNAMID deployment recalled:

> 'You put people on senior armourers courses and they're running armouries of 600 weapons, and you just know when you open the door that the 600 SLRs would not be in fit working order, there'd be rust in the barrels. Simple, tactical stuff. "Oh yes, sure enough, that's exactly how they are". So disappointing but unsurprising.'[207]

[202] Sierra Leone Ministry of Defence, 'Selection Processes for Officers and Soldiers Participating in Foreign Missions', online at http://www.mod.gov.sl/docs/Selection_Processes_in_the_RSLAF.pdf, accessed on 15/08/16.
[203] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*
[204] *Ibid.*; Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*
[205] Interview with Participant A8, *op. cit.*
[206] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*
[207] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*

While IMATT's gradual drawdown had meant it could no longer monitor and enforce compliance at the tactical level, the drive to deploy on PSOs meant that the RSLAF itself was forced to acknowledge its failings in these areas:

> 'because it was an operational deployment, it was no longer really satisfactory [for IMATT] to say "It'll be fine, we can't make them do it, we're only advisors now, if they don't want to do their Annual Personal Weapons Test they don't have to". We had…the stick of, "Well you've at least got to show your records and we've got to verify your records, and the UN will see your records. They may even take you up the ranges and ask you to do an APWT'".[208]

Crucially, however, the focus on PSOs mean that the objective standards of behaviour required, while still external, were no longer set by IMATT, but by the UN, and were tangibly linked to a goal even senior "old guard" RSLAF commanders were uniformly committed to.

This dynamic also extended to command appointments in the deploying units, and wider RSLAF promotions. Under Plan 2010, IMATT had attempted to use defined performance objectives as a means of displacing patronage and favouritism in RSLAF promotions, as it provided an objective metric against which to measure RSLAF commanders' subjective recommendations.[209] PSOs provided a particularly important means of reinforcing this relationship between performance and promotions, with wider benefits for professionalism and thus political accountability in the RSLAF. This was because when officers who were selected according to neo-patrimonial preferences did not perform on PSOs, it had significantly greater implications for the RSLAF than in a purely national context: 'The benefit again was it was an operational deployment, which meant it was a public embarrassment, both internally in Sierra Leone and externally because of course they were deployed.'[210] Indeed, the first officer appointed to command LEOBATT 1 was eventually sacked and replaced by a more capable officer.[211] A senior IMATT officer serving at the time of the UNAMID deployment recalled this dynamic playing out in conversations with the Defence Minister:

> 'at points when things were going badly – take a range of examples, the deployment just being one – "This officer is not performing." "No minister, well he wouldn't be if he's so-and-so's nephew and he's selected purely on that basis, as opposed to on the basis of merit, that's what you get. If you send an officer on staff course at enormous cost", either to Sierra Leone, or probably more importantly to

[208] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[209] Interview with Participant A22, *op. cit.*
[210] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[211] Interview with Colonel Jamie Martin, *op. cit.*

> the UK Government, because of course we were funding everything, "and he fails to perform, I'm irritated and you are rightly embarrassed."'[212]

The public embarrassment of failing to perform on the international stage, which deployment on PSOs potentially provided, had wider benefits for arresting neo-patrimonial proclivities, as the same officer argued:

> 'there was a great opportunity to say to him [Conteh], "You promoted him, you got that complete idiot doing that job, and you are lambasting your staff and me…because we've all collectively failed to educate and train and prepare this officer for this post. You will note however that he is bottom on the list of 46 majors for promotion and you still promoted him." Almost inevitably there was irrefutable evidence as to why the bloke was still an idiot and shouldn't have been there.'[213]

Hence, PSOs not only provided a vehicle for improving RSLAF military effectiveness, but were also important in reinforcing meritocracy in RSLAF functions like promotions. These were crucial to Plan 2010's approach to normative generational change, but British withdrawal meant IMATT could no longer otherwise protect them.

The impact of PSOs extended to the wider organisational structure of the RSLAF. With the AMSIOM mission projected to absorb around a third of the RSLAF's manpower, PSOs also had the potential to force the RSLAF to review its own internal composition. Ever since the 2003 Defence White Paper, both GOSL and the RSLAF had failed to carry out a proper defence review. Yet, to sustain the AMISOM commitment, British officers recognised that the force would have to undertake a fairly significant restructuring, as it would be unable to continue to generate ad hoc composite battalions on that scale indefinitely. Yet this would also mean challenging some of the RSLAF's "sacred cows" about its overall strength and organisation. As one British officer observed, there 'was an unwillingness on the part of the military to embrace some of those difficult issues, so it was a sort of head in the sand syndrome'.[214] Had Ebola not intervened to curtail the AMISOM deployment, however, the RSLAF's commitment to PSOs would likely have forced the issue.

Conclusions

As IMATT downsized, its ability to exercise influence over the RSLAF also declined. Although it still retained the ear of strategic decision makers, like the

[212] Interview with Participant A19, *op. cit.*
[213] *Ibid.*
[214] Interview with Participant A5, *op. cit.*

President and the Defence Minister, its political influence was nonetheless diminished. It part, this was a product of the reduced British political commitment to Sierra Leone, which by 2007 was no longer high on the UK Government's strategic agenda. But equally, reductions in IMATT's strength also reduced its direct oversight and situational awareness of RSLAF activity, especially at the tactical level. The increasing RSLAF resistance to IMATT oversight was particularly noticeable in the relationship between IMATT and Major General Nelson-Williams. Although Nelson-Williams was ultimately replaced, IMATT was less able to constrain the new Defence Minister, Paolo Conteh. Consequently, as IMATT withdrew, the RSLAF's old neo-patrimonial culture reappeared. This undermined the foundations of normative civil-military behaviour, and jeopardised Plan 2010's mechanisms for sustaining long-term transformation through cultural re-socialisation and generational change.

Although this does not detract from the concept of normative generational change itself, as IMATT was ultimately replaced by ISAT before the "new generation" had acceded to senior command, it does raise fundamental questions about the suitability of this model in the Sierra Leonean context. This is especially so, given that senior IMATT officers recognised IMATT's likely timespan even as Plan 2010 was launched in 2004. In fact, IMATT persisted until 2013 – over two years longer than Plan 2010 envisaged. To a certain extent, therefore, Albrecht and Jackson's criticisms of IMATT reforms as only partially sustainable, and therefore somewhat inappropriate, are justifiable.[215] However, the period of IMATT withdrawal also witnessed some significant improvements in RSLAF military effectiveness. Although this was somewhat faltering, and confined to distinct elements of the force, both PSOs and the Ebola pandemic demonstrated a degree of military effectiveness well in excess of that seen during the Rebel War. Ultimately, the RSLAF even managed to somewhat out-perform British aspirations of operating at sub-unit level, though not with regard to logistical or operational support. Moreover, as the RSLAF's conduct during the 2012 elections highlighted, the new-found focus on PSOs does not appear to have undermined the RSLAF's democratic accountability per se. Indeed, even given the gradual increase in patrimonial behaviour in the force, the behaviour of civilian political elites appeared far more

[215] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*

dangerous to democratic civil-military relations during the election period than any RSLAF behaviour.

Yet, Albrecht and Haenlein's description of the identity-generating benefits of PSOs underpinning democratic civil-military relations in the RSLAF is problematic.[216] It is not clear that PSOs produced any specific identity that was not already present in the RSLAF; in fact, much of Plan 2010's reforms had aimed to produce new cultural norms through institutional regeneration, and the RSLAF's existing history and identity clearly played a role in this. PSOs do, however appear to have supported democratic civil-military relations in Sierra Leone. In principle, the revenue to be made from PSOs provided one mechanism through which this may have occurred, as it might potentially have allowed the RSLAF to financially sustain its intuitional development. In reality, however, the high proportion of PSO reimbursements paid out in operational allowances negated much of the financial benefit of PSOs. The impact of PSO training did provide some wider institutional benefit. More profoundly, however, the need to perform on PSOs, in order to maintain face and keep the revenue stream open, implicitly limited neo-patrimonial practices. Competence had to be considered when appointing officers and soldiers, and training and equipment could not be ignored. Even the payment of operational allowances to soldiers partially supported accountability; while it encouraged neo-patrimonialism, it also raised the stakes, necessitating a degree of transparency. Ultimately, PSOs acted like an external audit mechanism on the RSLAF, which served to reinforce meritocratic and professional practices (at least at a minimum level) helping both accountability and performance. Unlike some of Plan 2010's reforms, however, PSOs provided an operational goal which even senior RSLAF officers could buy into, even if much of path there was still dictated by externals. Although not carried out through wartime adaptation, this challenges Grissom's assertion that external intervention may impede local desires for change.[217]

[216] Albrecht & Haenlein, *op. cit.*
[217] Adam Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars: NATO Advisors and Military Adaptation in the Afghan National Army, 2001-2011', in Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga & James A. Russell (eds.), *Military Adaptation in Afghanistan* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 275-6.

This conclusion has wider implications for the study of civil-military relations in the non-Western world. It suggests that local ownership of externally-required defence reforms (including some cultural change) is possible, providing the *justification* for change is acceptable to local actors. In the case of the RSLAF, a degree of meritocracy in promotions and appointments proved acceptable, but only because it was a necessary requirement for PSOs. The same reforms had proved far more contested when presented as a means of achieving civilian control under Plan 2010. Yet in both cases, the net result was similar – if on a somewhat different scale. Moreover, the relationship between effectiveness and accountability seen in the RSLAF differs significantly from Huntington's model of objective control. Indeed, the active involvement of Paolo Conteh in RSLAF appointments and PSOs does not appear to have undermined RSLAF effectiveness or accountability any more than the cultural proclivities of senior RSLAF officers. While GOSL undoubtedly made political appointments, it also intervened in the RSLAF to ensure effectiveness, as with the removal of Nelson-Williams.

Instead, the case of the RSLAF supports Bruneau and Matei's view that democratic civil-military relations are based equally on accountability and effectiveness, neither of which are the unique preserve of a professional military.[218] Not only does effectiveness define the purpose of the military profession, but it can help to reinforce accountability. By the same token, Kreb's assertion that internal military processes are simply the product of wider social and political trends does not appear sustainable.[219] While the RSLAF undoubtedly found itself at the mercy of civilian elite's patrimonial proclivities, the relationship between the RSLAF and GOSL was equally tempered by the need to maintain a degree of operational effectiveness – and therefore a somewhat distinct professional military culture. This limited GOSL's neo-patrimonial meddling as much as it did senior RSLAF officers'. Thus, while the relationship between military and society may not be totally reciprocal, the military was not entirely suborned either.

[218] Matei, *op. cit*.
[219] Krebs, *op. cit.*

9. Conclusions

This thesis has sought to understand how and why externally-led military change occurs. As ambitious attempts at liberal peacebuilding, it is unsurprising that the state- and nation-building projects in Iraq and Afghanistan have been difficult, contested and problematic. Yet, the inability to produce capable local armed forces during those interventions is noteworthy, given the long history of military capacity building displayed by those same intervening Western armed forces. This thesis has aimed to better understand this incongruity by examining the conduct of one case of externally-led military change that enjoyed relative success: the reform of the RSLAF. The rebuilding of the RSLAF was not focused simply on improving its military effectiveness, but also on its improving democratic civil-military behaviour. As such, it was a bold attempt to remake the internal culture of the RSLAF, and with it, the dominant norms of military behaviour in Sierra Leone. As one IMATT officer observed, normative change in the RSLAF's organisational culture was critical to SSR, because 'you can't have a force that is capable of defending the borders and [simultaneously] incapable of conducting a military coup.'[1] IMATT's relatively successful experience advances our understanding of the dynamics of extraneous military change, and with it, the relationship between military culture and military change which has come to play such a central – if confused – role in the broader scholarship on military innovation. In so doing, this thesis concludes that IMATT's experience in remaking military culture in the RSLAF offers some troubling insights into the contemporary praxis of building other people's armies, and the recent conduct of Western interventions more widely.

Military Culture and Military Change

Military organisations change for many different reasons, but current scholarship has advanced relatively few *mechanisms* through which such changes actually occur. Initially, Posen concluded that as risk-conscious bureaucracies, military institutions should be inherently difficult to change. Consequently, external civilian intervention was required to overcome the military's status quo resistance to innovation; the mechanism of reform being

[1] Interview with Participant A14, a retired senior British officer in IMATT in 2002, conducted in Wiltshire on 21 September 2015.

civilian patronage of military mavericks. Thus, Posen advocated a civil-military model of top-down change, in which external drivers of change interacted with internal ones; civilian political oversight advanced military mavericks uninfluenced by the military's existing norms.[2] Avant developed this civil-military school further, arguing that the structure of civilian political oversight affected civilian elites' ability to interject effectively in military affairs.[3] Later, Rosen developed a competing explanation for military change which privileged internal military dynamics. Rosen found that in many instances, change resulted from competition within the officer corps over rival visions of military best practice. Competing factions pursued campaigns of bureaucratic warfare against their rivals, seeking to co-opt influential leaders, enlist civilian policy-makers, control important departments, and, once in the ascendancy, used the military institution's own processes of socialisation, training and career incentives to perpetuate their reforms.[4]

Recently, these top-down mechanisms of peacetime military change have been complemented by study of grass-roots adaptation during wartime. Grissom observed how military innovations can result, almost inadvertently, from the practical experience of war, by stimulating change either through inventive problem-solving or the test and adjustment of existing concepts.[5] Farrell concluded that improvements in the British military's conduct of counter-insurgency in Helmand resulted from successive adaptations, each building on the observed fate of previous tactical iterations during active campaigning.[6] These insights have given rise to a significant body of literature examining armed forces as "learning organisations", in which organised lesson learning processes capture, evaluate and disseminate useful adaptation throughout the military institution. In this fashion, it is contended that battlefield adaptations can be converted into more profound and lasting organisational and institutional

[2] Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: France, Britain, and Germany between the World Wars* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1984).
[3] Deborah D. Avant, *Political Institutions and Military Change: Lessons from Peripheral Wars* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1994).
[4] Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 1991).
[5] Adam Grissom, 'The Future of Military innovation Studies', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 29:5 (2006), pp. 920-924.
[6] Theo Farrell, 'Improving in War: Military Adaptation and the British in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, 2006–2009', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 33:4 (2010), pp. 567-594.

change, based on their proven functional utility in war.[7] This literature has not been confined to recent military campaigns, however, and research has similarly demonstrated the importance of equivalent formal or informal processes to major historical innovations in warfare.[8] Most significantly, Grissom concluded that ISAF's failure to produce an effective ANA stemmed from a mixture of active ISAF combat operations, which insulated the ANA from adaptive pressure, and Western interventionists' inability to displace the Afghan military's neo-patrimonial culture, which consequently subverted top-down reforms.[9]

Indeed, the power of military culture to compel or preclude innovation, and in so doing shape other mechanisms of military change, forms a significant theme in the academic literature. Kier, for example, demonstrated that civil-military mechanisms of change are mediated by the military's own institutional culture, observing how politically-driven changes in the French military's organisation in the form of reduced lengths of conscription did result in military change, but that the resulting reorientation – from a French military attuned for offense to one calibrated for defence – was defined primarily by the preconceptions (or rather, misconceptions) of the French military's internal culture.[10] Similarly, Farrell found that the interwar Irish army adopted a small, professionalised military model which was strategically inappropriate, largely because prevailing military cultures viewed this structure as more normatively legitimate.[11] Here, military culture proved equally strategically misguided, but actively served to impel military change to a far greater degree than in Kier's case study, in which French military parochialism largely precluded the adoption

[7] Robert T. Foley, Stuart Griffin & Helen McCartney, '"Transformation in contact": Learning the Lessons of Modern War', *International Affairs*, 87:2 (2011), pp. 253-70; Paddy O'Toole & Steven Talbot, 'Fighting for Knowledge: Developing Learning Systems in the Australian Army', *Armed Forces & Society*, 37:1 (2011), pp. 42-67.
[8] Robert T. Foley, 'A Case Study in Horizontal Military Innovation: The German Army, 1916–1918', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 35:6 (2012), pp. 799-827; Robert T. Foley, 'Dumb Donkeys or Cunning Foxes? Learning in the British and German Armies During the Great War', *International Affairs*, 90:2 (2014), pp. 279-98.
[9] Adam Grissom, 'Shoulder-to-Shoulder Fighting Different Wars: NATO Advisors and Military Adaptation in the Afghan National Army, 2001-2011', in Theo Farrell, Frans Osinga & James A. Russell (eds.), *Military Adaptation in Afghanistan* (Stanford, CA, Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 263-87.
[10] Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine between the Wars* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1997).
[11] Theo Farrell, 'World Culture and the Irish Army, 1922-1942', in Theo Farrell & Terry Terriff, *The Sources of Military Change: Culture, Politics, Technology* (Boulder, CO, Lynne Rienner, 2002), pp. 69-90.

of more novel (and ultimately successful) ways of war. The durability of military culture and its norms of behaviour have also been cited as a significant impediment to successful adaptive change, despite the immediately observable impact of military missteps during warfare. Thus, Kollars highlighted how adaptive 'adhocracies' in the US military failed to survive the wars they were created to support. Catignani observed how adaptive changes to counter-insurgency in the British military were frequently ignored or imperfectly applied, because lessons learnt systems stopped short of producing profound institutional change, and so failed to displace the predominant British military culture of convention warfighting.[12] King likewise observed how culture conditioned – often inappropriately – the very adaptive responses Farrell characterised as the product of dynamic interaction with the enemy.[13]

The difficulty in overcoming contradictory local (including military) culture has formed a significant critique of SSR, and liberal intervention more generally. SSR has been criticised as an overly technocratic process of institutional reform, which has traditionally made insufficient attempts to engage with local political realities.[14] In Sierra Leone in specific, Albrecht and Jackson concluded that this has potentially resulted in unsustainable change, precariously reliant on an isolated handful of local clients after British supervision was withdrawn.[15] More broadly, dissatisfaction with the reality of liberal peacebuilding – and particularly the form of state- and nation-building seen in Iraq and Afghanistan – has led to a plethora of calls for greater 'local ownership' of grass-roots change. Here, liberal intervention has largely been dismissed because of its insistence on imposing inappropriate Weberian governance systems on culturally unreceptive societies – or to put it another way, the inability to remake local politics and society sufficiently to legitimate such institutions (irrespective of the ethics of attempting to do so). This, so it is argued, accounts for liberal peacebuilding's failures. In like fashion, the difficulty of reshaping military

[12] Sergio Catignani, '"Getting COIN" at the Tactical Level in Afghanistan: Reassessing Counter-Insurgency Adaptation in the British Army', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 35:4 (2012), pp. 513–539; Sergio Catignani, 'Coping with Knowledge: Organizational Learning in the British Army?', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 37:1 (2014), pp. 30-64.
[13] Anthony King, 'Understanding the Helmand Campaign: British Military Operations in Afghanistan', *International Affairs*, 86: 2 (2010), pp. 311–332.
[14] Timothy Edmunds, 'Security Sector Reform', in Thomas C. Bruneau & Florina Cristiana Matei (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Civil-Military Relations* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2013), pp. 48-60.
[15] Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone 1997-2013: Defence, Diplomacy and Development in Action* (London, Routledge, 2014).

institutional culture in separation from wider society forms a significant critique of military integration and national army building as a tool of SSR.[16] Yet, the relationship between military culture and military change has come under scrutiny of late. Griffin has highlighted how, despite the emphasis placed on cultural factors, constructivist scholars have consistently failed to demonstrate the explanatory power of culture in causing military change over and above the structural and functional mechanisms advocated by the civil-military, institutional, and adaptive explanations.[17] In consequence, the relative significance of culture in actually initiating military change – and by implication, therefore, also in preventing it – has been called into question.

Here, the analysis of IMATT's reform of the RSLAF presented in this thesis offers a particularly insightful case study. As a rare example of successful military change, in which the object was a reformed local military culture as much as improved battlefield capability, *how* and *why* IMATT was able to produce normative change in the RSLAF is vital to understanding whether SSR is a useful tool of liberal intervention, and whether military culture does independently account for military organisational or institutional change. Does military culture explain *why* military organisations change, or simply affect *how* they do so? Can, therefore, external interventionists produce military change in local armed forces regardless of the prevailing organisational norms, or only when the advocated changes accord with them?

By examining the process of military change IMATT pursued in the RSLAF, this thesis has shown that just as culture may affect the course of military institutional change, so certain types of military institutional change directly shape military culture. The relationship between organisational change and culture is dynamic and reciprocal. This is not to diminish the clear influence institutional culture has over soldiers' decisions and actions; far from it. It is the institution which gives form to that culture, and defines the norms which shape

[16] Ronald R. Krebs, 'A School for the Nation? How Military Service Does Not Build Nations, and How It Might', *International Security*, 28:4 (2004), pp. 85-124; Ronald R. Krebs, 'One Nation under Arms? Military Participation Policy and the Politics of Identity', *Security Studies*, 14:3 (2005), pp. 529–564; Ronald R. Krebs, 'Military Dis-Integration: Canary in the Coal Mine?', in Roy Licklider (ed.), *New Armies from Old: Merging Competing Military Forces after Civil War* (Washington, DC, 2014), pp. 245-58.

[17] Stuart Griffin, 'Military Innovation Studies: Multidisciplinary or Lacking Discipline?', *Journal of Strategic Studies* (2016), pp. 9-10, online first at http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01402390.2016.1196358?needAccess=true, accessed 01/09/16.

soldiers' behaviour – their decisions in relations to civilian politics just as their decisions on the battlefield. In consequence, changing the military institution can directly reshape military cultural norms. However, only explicitly *institutional* mechanisms of military change can account for changes in military culture, and with it, profound military transformation – and in the RSLAF, these changes could only be driven extraneously by IMATT.

Intervening in the RSLAF's Military Culture

Prior to British intervention, the Sierra Leonean military was deeply politicised. In the years following independence, the SLA's organisational culture (and with it, the norms of military behaviour) became intensely neo-patrimonial, as demonstrated in Chapter 4. Recruitment and promotion were defined by patrimonialism, politicising the military along party-political and ethnic bloc lines. The "card system" made officers' and soldiers' careers beholden to political "big men", either directly, or via intervening military patrons who themselves acted as political clients.[18] As Sierra Leone descended into civil war, the hollowed-out neo-patrimonial state crumbled and the RSLMF proved itself unable to contain the growing RUF threat. Early in the war, the military did attempt to adapt to the RUF insurgency by promoting local defence militias, and by rapidly increasing in strength. However, these measures proved insufficient to contain the spiralling violence, which the RSLMF's predatory tendencies further exacerbated. Unable to militarily adapt sufficiently, the RSLMF's underlying political proclivities rose to the surface in a series of military coups, each leading to the further politicisation and fragmentation of the military. As Gberie argued, civil-military interactions drove these coups, as civilian big men supported and encouraged political factions within the military to their mutual advantage.[19] Yet, the wartime collapse of the RSLMF also reflected the military's pre-war political culture. Keen has demonstrated how the rise of the "sobel" phenomenon was a response to the pre-war privatisation of politics under neo-patrimonialism.[20] Thus, groups like the West Side Boys came to view armed force as a legitimate tool of political negotiation, switching sides and allegiances for personal gain as

[18] Anton Bebler, *Military Rule in Africa: Dahomey, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Mali* (New York, NY, Praeger, 1973); Paul Jackson & Peter Albrecht, *Reconstructing Security after Conflict: Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2011), p. 61.
[19] Lansana Gberie, 'The May 25 Coup d'Etat in Sierra Leone: A Militariat Revolt?', *Africa Development*, 22:3/4 (1997), pp. 149-170.
[20] David Keen, *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (Oxford, James Currey, 2005).

a means of navigating in the kaleidoscopic milieu of wartime armed politics.[21] It was this politicised neo-patrimonial culture which IMATT aimed to address in the RSLAF.

Following British military intervention in the Rebel War in 2000, the SLAF received significant military aid from the UK, eventually leading to the restoration of GOSL sovereignty throughout the country and the resumption of democratic governance in 2002. Much of combat power required to defeat the RUF was provided by British and UN troops, and mercenary airpower serving under the flag of Sierra Leone. However, British intervention did result in some tentative improvements in the SLAF's military capacity, which as Ucko pointed out, were pivotal to the eventual success of the British-led stabilisation campaign.[22] During the Rebel War, British officers effectively assumed operational command of the SLAF. Mentors embedded in the SLAF provided a link between Sierra Leonean tactical formations and British campaign direction, simultaneously supporting incremental improvements in SLA performance through the provision of tactical advice and support to unit-level command and control. Under the auspices of Operations Basilica and Silkman, British STTTs also reconstituted and retrained entire SLA battalions and brigades. This "train and equip" capacity building did result in a noticeable improvement in SLAF capabilities. Despite the STTT's emphasis on tactical training and organisational reconstitution, these activities were fundamentally adaptive in nature. As one British adviser remarked, the aim of tactical mentoring was to 'reinforce and make better what they're going to do anyway'.[23] STTTs focused on rudimentary military skills like drill, marksmanship and small-unit tactics using existing British military techniques as a model. While this low-level retraining made the SLAF far more militarily useable, it did not fundamentally reshape the norms of the force, nor totally displace previous SLAF adaptations to the character of the Rebel War, like the continued use of "technicals". Indeed, one of the more significant improvements in SLAF wartime capacity resulted from procedural

[21] Mats Utas & Magnus Jörgel, 'The West Side Boys: Military Navigation in the Sierra Leone Civil War', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 46:3 (2008), pp. 487-511.
[22] David H. Ucko, 'Can Limited Intervention Work? Lessons from Britain's Success Story in Sierra Leone', *Journal of Strategic studies* (2015), pp. 1-31, online first at http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/01402390.2015.1110695?needAccess=true, accessed on 05/09/16.
[23] Interview with Participant A15, a British Army officer who served with IMATT in 2000-1, conducted in Salisbury on 1 October 2015.

adaptations in the SLAF's logistics systems, which reduced the window of time SLAF units were combat ineffective.[24]

The limitations of the wartime adaptation facilitated by British "train and equip" capacity building were evident in the failure of a number of IMATT's immediate post-war reforms. The normative agenda of the 2003 White Paper, as well as the barracks rebuilding programme known as Operation Pebu, were both frustrated by the post-war RSLAF's continuing neo-patrimonial culture. The RSLAF resented civilian oversight of the armed forces, manifested in the new joint civilian-military MOD, and actively resisted civilian intrusions into its internal affairs. Equally, RSLAF commanders were less than committed to Operation Pebu despite the fact that a lack of proper barracks precluded further training and development of the force, largely because the standard of accommodation Pebu offered did not accord with the elevated social and political position the RSLAF felt it was entitled to. Despite the limited tactical improvements wartime British adaptations had produced, the RSLAF's organisational culture was unchanged. The force remained politically unreliable in the immediate post-war period, to the extent that British officers found it necessary to redeploy the RSLAF away from population centres in advance of the 2002 presidential elections. This concern was significantly borne out by the military's voting patterns during the election, which supported the former "sobel" commander and junta leader, Johnny Paul Koroma. Even the influx of former militiamen and rebels via the MRP proved unable to shake the RSLAF's established military culture.

The lack of profound normative change in the RSLAF also precluded significant improvements in military effectiveness. Unlike in Grissom's study of ISAF's relationship with the ANA, British intervention did facilitate some improvements in SLAF capacity during the Rebel War. These were largely the result of British-led adaptations, either through mentoring, direct control, or "train and equip" capacity building. However, they were not sufficient to alter the military balance of power on the ground in favour of GOSL without significant additional combat power provided by British, UN and mercenary troops. Moreover, these adaptations did not radically alter the behavioural or cultural norms of the Sierra Leonean military. Consequently, the RSLAF's military

[24] Interview with Participant A15, *op. cit.*

effectiveness and democratic accountability remained poor in the immediate aftermath of war. The continued military incapacity of the RSLAF was laid bare during post-war border security operations. Here, IMATT officers attributed operational failings as much to the institutional culture of the RSLAF as to its logistical deficiencies; as Colonel Stadward remarked, RSLAF operations 'were better off when they were led by Brits than when they were led by Sierra Leoneans, 'cos the Sierra Leoneans don't really want to do it. It's a bit hard.'[25] The presence of international forces did not preclude adaptive change in the SLAF – in fact, it facilitated it – but rather, the short-term and tactical focus of these adaptive changes failed address the neo-patrimonial proclivities of the SLAF's military culture.

However, the institutionally-focused approach IMATT adopted during 2003-4, as Plan 2010 was formalised, had significantly more success. As Chapter 7 demonstrated, under Plan 2010 IMATT pursued a more coherent strategy of change in the RSLAF, using the military's rebuilt institutional processes as a tool to realign RSLAF norms. New recruitment processes eroded the neo-patrimonial practices of the "card system", ensuring a degree of ethnic, regional and political balance through meritocratic recruitment. New educational and training standards were used to directly address the civil-military norms of the force, with a focus on civic education and military law. Formal military disciplinary systems were reintroduced into the RSLAF, including a new court martial process. However, the centre-piece of this socialising endeavour was a new career structure which emphasised meritocracy and PME. RSLAF officers were inculcated with new, professionalised values during courses at the Horton Academy, and overseas. During these courses, officers were deliberately isolated from the wider social milieu of the RSLAF to improve their socialising effect. Not only did these courses aim to improve the RSLAF's military capability by providing technical instruction, they were also intended to reshape the Sierra Leonean officer corps' cultural outlook. By linking PME to career progression, and by making promotion contingent on a degree of meritocratic performance through boarding processes, IMATT began to re-orientate the career incentives of military service away from political and neo-patrimonial transactions, and towards a more

[25] Interview with Lieutenant Colonel (retd.) Jeremey Stadward, a senior British officer in IMATT 2001-3, conducted in Wiltshire on 8 September 2015.

professional, inward-looking military culture grounded in specifically military identities.

To reinforce the socialising power of training, education and career progression, IMATT focused its normative efforts on junior and middle-ranking RSLAF officers who it believed would be more susceptible to IMATT's influence – and to the influence of new career incentives. These officers were also perceived to have fewer stakes in the established neo-patrimonial economy of the RSLAF. Here, IMATT deftly manipulated existing inter-generational tensions in the RSLAF's officer corps, between senior commanders from the SLA's "old guard" and younger officers, who believed that the military's war record had delegitimised the senior cohort – and with it, potentially, their values as well. Hence, IMATT overtly pursued a generational model of change, in which normative re-socialisation was focused on more impressionable junior officers, and sympathetic middle-ranking ones, while IMATT accepted that 'the senior officers were never going to change, fundamentally…that was a generation that had already been lost'.[26] IMATT recognised that it still required senior RSLAF commanders to make the force function and to provide indigenous legitimacy, but attempted to create an "air gap" between politicised senior commanders and more junior officer cohorts, in an attempt to 'manage the older generation; trying to prevent them from creating more chaos, more institutional chaos than was absolutely necessary.'[27] Here, succession planning, and highly targeted redundancy campaigns were used to enforce a degree of conformity among the senior echelons of the RSLAF's command, remove threats to the new normative culture IMATT was promoting, and hasten the replacement of senior commanders with more normatively aligned subordinates. This included the dismissal of two RSLAF CDS at IMATT's behest, in a more consciously constructed parallel to Saideman's observation of cultural change in the Canadian military through generational turnover in senior leadership.[28]

The implementation of institutional reform, especially those elements which directly challenged neo-patrimonial norms and so had the greatest re-

[26] Interview with Participant A14, *op. cit.*
[27] Interview with Participant A19, a senior British officer in IMATT 2008-11, conducted by Skype on 20 October 2015.
[28] Stephen M. Saideman, 'Canadian Forces in Afghanistan: Minority Government and Generational Change While Under Fire', in Farrell, Osinga & Russell, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-241

socialising value, proved to be a deeply political and contested process. To a significant extent, IMATT therefore relied on civil-military mechanisms of change, similar to those described by Posen. As one IMATT officer stated, 'IMATT's patronage came from the President, Kabbah…if there was resentment of IMATT, or "we don't like what IMATT are doing", they knew that basically IMATT had the ear of the President…it was a lever, I suppose, over the military.'[29] As an external in the RSLAF, IMATT used this political influence to enact (and at times impose) institutional change in RSLAF; not unlike Posen's politically-backed military mavericks. For a time, IMATT became the biggest "big man" in the RSLAF. Equally though, IMATT was not totally reliant on Sierra Leonean politicians for influence, maintaining its own sources of patronage – like expertise and funding – which it could use conditionally to encourage compliance even in the absence of direct political support.

As this thesis has demonstrated, institutional reconstruction was not an end in of itself, but a means of reshaping the norms of Sierra Leonean military culture. Here, institutional change was used to re-socialise RSLAF officers and ensure generational replacement of the existing neo-patrimonial culture. In this fashion, institutional reconstruction, implemented using a civil-military model of change, was a vehicle to creating a new culture among younger cohorts of RSLAF officers, which would ultimately replace older norms of behaviour through a structured process of intra-service rivalry. Thus, externally-led change in the RSLAF occurred in exactly the reverse of Rosen's description of internal military change. IMATT used institutional mechanisms of socialisation to engender and promote cultural competition in the RSLAF, rather than to institutionalise victory. IMATT would then ensure this intra-generational rivalry would result in normative cultural change, but without having to first convince a critical mass of senior RSLAF officers of its necessity. Normative change was directed from above and outside, but occurred from the ground up.

This blend of civil-military and intra-service imperatives for institutional change did have some impact on RSLAF behavioural norms, as this thesis has shown. The RSLAF's conduct during the 2007 and 2012 elections demonstrated a degree of democratic realignment – notwithstanding criticism

[29] Interview with Colonel (retd.) Philip Stack, IMATT officer serving as the RSLAF Deputy Joint Force Commander in 2004, conducted in Bath on 17 August 2015.

that the RSLAF's positive conduct was largely a product of continued IMATT supervision.[30] In both instances, while IMATT was undoubtedly highly influential – and indeed, maintained the notional ability to call on British reinforcements – IMATT would not have been physically able to prevent a coup, had the RSLAF made a concerted attempt. Equally, the "friends of IMATT" phenomenon demonstrates a degree of intra-service rivalry over fundamentally cultural norms of military service in the RSLAF. While the continued presence of such antagonisms highlight the fact that generational change was by no means complete as IMATT began to withdraw, it clearly shows the impact of externally-directed institutional change on normative resocialisation. As this thesis has argued, military change, primarily directed and enacted by external interventionists, did alter local military culture, but only through recourse to the socialising power of the military as an institution. However, the interaction between civil-military and intra-service mechanisms of change, and with it the relative balance of power between internal and external actors in the RSLAF, was challenged after the 2007 change of government and concomitant IMATT drawdown.

The Politics of Cultural Change: External Intervention and Military Effectiveness in Sierra Leone

As Chapter 5 discussed, British intervention in Sierra Leone resulted from a convergence of strategic circumstances which limited other options, rather than from any clearly identified British national interests at stake in the Rebel War per se. As Dorman and Ucko have highlighted,[31] Britain's military and political commitment to Sierra Leone expanded largely as a product of circumstances on the ground, driven by operational necessities rather than from any deliberate metropolitan calculus. While the British post-conflict commitment to Sierra Leone was nonetheless remarkable for its duration, it was clear to IMATT from relatively early in its existence that the mission's length would be limited. The successful transition of power between the SLPP and the APC in elections in 2007 was a sufficient reputational indicator of success to precipitate British drawdown. IMATT's relationship with the incoming government, while largely

[30] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*
[31] Andrew M. Dorman, *Blair's Successful War: British Military Intervention in Sierra Leone* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2009); Ucko, *op. cit.*

positive and in many respects still unrivalled in terms of access, was less accommodating than it had been previously. IMATT's sway over the RSLAF's behaviour diminished as IMATT drew down, reducing its ability to maintain direct control over institutional changes and thus manipulate intra-generational dynamics. Though IMATT retained significant influence, its institutional and normative authority diminished, jeopardising the hoped-for generational change in RSLAF organisational culture which was only partially underway. As one IMATT officer serving just after the 2007 change of government remarked, 'Do you affect the younger officers? Yes you do, but not as much effect as that brigade commander, that commanding officer, that company commander.'[32] The limited extent of generational change in the Sierra Leonean officer corps meant that on withdrawal, the re-socialising effect of IMATT's institutional reform of the RSLAF was partial rather than total, and the RSLAF's old neo-patrimonial culture began to re-assert itself.

This resulted in partial normative change in the RSLAF at best, calling into question its long-term durability once IMATT was replaced by ISAT. Simultaneously, it highlights the importance of profound *institutional* change to remaking organisational culture – and the centrality of external actors in effecting such contested reforms. Anecdotally, the comparable experience of Western-led reform of the SLP is insightful here. Like the RSLAF, the SLP also underwent an institutional rejuvenation, which included police station and barracks rebuilding, rank restructuring, and a retraining programme called 'Back to Basics'.[33] This was supported by police mentors, first from the Commonwealth Police Development Task Force, and subsequently from the Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project. GOSL also appointed a senior British police officer as Inspector-General, Keith Biddle, with executive

[32] Interview with Participant A24, a retired British officer in IMATT 2007-9, conducted in Exeter on 26 November 2015.
[33] Interview with Robin Campbell, Policing Adviser in Sierra Leone, and retired Chief Superintendent of the
Police Service of Northern Ireland, conducted in Belfast on 3 December 2007 by Daniel Scher as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 11, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/robin-campbell, accessed on 21/08/16; Interview with Adrian Horn, British mentor to the Sierra Leone Police, conducted in Norfolk on 5 December 2007 by Daniel Scher as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 3, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/adrian-horn, accessed 22/04/16; Kadi Fakondo, 'Reforming and Building Capacity of the Sierra Leone Police, 1999-2007', in Peter Albrecht & Paul Jackson (eds.), *Security Sector Reform in Sierra Leone 1997 - 2007: Views from the Front Line* (Berlin, Lit, 2010), pp. 161-70.

powers to command the force. As Charley and M'Cormack noted, Biddle used a generational mechanism of change to address the neo-patrimonial and predatory norms of the SLP.[34]

Just as with IMATT's experience in the RSLAF, Biddle found that 'the senior officers in place would not be able to take things forward and certainly wouldn't allow anything to change because they had their hands in the honey jar'.[35] Consequently, Biddle identified a cohort of middle-ranking SLP officers who could be groomed for senior command and would promote out older officers, whose behaviours he considered to be an impediment to change:

> 'what I was really trying to do was to capacitate a team of 20 or 30 people who could manage the force for the next 10, 15 years; this generational thing…I had a top triangle of about 50 to 100, who were the people who in a reasonable amount of time would be fit for promotion to higher ranks, then I had a bottom tier of the triangle, who were people who were showing glimpses of potential which would enable them to advance up the triangle.'[36]

As part of this succession planning, British police mentors also arranged for up-and-coming SLP commanders to receive extensive re-training in the UK at the Police Staff College at Bramshill.[37] As with elements of Plan 2010, Biddle found that this process of normative generational change was contested by some SLP officers:

> 'A lot of the ones who wanted to cause you the most trouble had been the ones who'd been the most corrupt. Quickly spotted that. So you had to deal with them. The minute they passed the retirement age you retired them, with full benefits, and they went. And to give the younger, keener, more forward-thinking generation the space to go, because if you allow these people to stay at the top, they eventually become a cork in a bottle of champagne, so bubbles can't get out. So you've got to ensure they've got a changeover of staff, and you don't allow people to cork the bottle for their own gains or their own reasons, and stop progress.'[38]

This led to some notable advances in SLP capabilities. One prominent example was the creation of the Families Support Unit – championed by one of the SLP's new cohort of leaders, Assistant Inspector General Kadi Fakondo – another, the

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[34] Joseph P. Chris Charley & Freida Ibiduni M'Cormack, 'Becoming and Remaining a "Force for Good" – Reforming the Police in Post-conflict Sierra Leone', Institute for Development Studies Research Report No. 70 (Brighton, September 2011), pp. 18-21.
[35] Interview with Keith Biddle, Inspector General of Police of the Sierra Leone Police 1999-2004, and retired British Assistant Inspector of Constabulary, conducted in Cheshire on 5 December 2007 by Gordon Peake, as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 19, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/keith-biddle, accessed on 25/05/16.
[36] Interview with Keith Biddle, Inspector General of Police of the Sierra Leone Police 1999-2004, and retired British Assistant Inspector of Constabulary, conducted in Cheshire on 9 July 2015.
[37] *Ibid.*; Interview with Adrian Horn, *op. cit.* p. 14.
[38] Interview with Keith Biddle conducted on 9 July 2015, *op. cit.*

newly-formed Complaints, Discipline and Internal Investigation Department.[39] Such innovations heralded a more normative approach to policing, which included the introduction of community-based policing structures,[40] police primacy, and the demilitarisation of standard SLP training.[41] As in the RSLAF, these reforms did not simply result in organisational change, but according to Fakondo, 'actually changed the mindset of the police officers that are in the SLP'.[42]

However, the institutional aspects of reform were less prominent in the SLP than in the RSLAF, resulting largely in leadership change without accompanying intra-service competition over cultural norms. It therefore produced little immediate normative change in the SLP at the tactical level. Although Biddle was able to assemble a team of reform-minded senior officers as a succession plan to sustain the reform of the SLP, these officers were hand-picked and many had been accelerated through the ranks into senior appointments. Consequently, while there was a cadre of reform-minded senior commanders, they did not represent a wider cohort of normatively re-socialised SLP officers. Indeed, the attitudes and behaviours of many of the junior officers underneath this senior tier remained unchanged, as Fakondo recalled:

> 'when the restructuring of the SLP came [it was as if] we (all SLP officers) were all standing on the platform…There were those of us who were ready to jump on board this [restructuring] train. There were those standing in the middle very confused – should I get on the train or not, what benefit am I going to get from this? And then there was a third group – I do not want change. I'm not going to get on board this train. So we had this task of actually working hard to convince others to come on board'.[43]

As the UN Police Chief of Staff in Sierra Leone in 2008, Vincent Dzakpata, later observed, this led to long-term difficulties in sustaining reforms in the SLP:

> 'you see a very big change in the attitude of the AIGs (Assistant Inspector-General of Police), the Deputy Inspector-General of Police and the Inspector-General of Police…But the major problem is the middle level management, which is a big problem for executive management now…without the support of the middle level,

[39] Interview with Keith Biddle conducted on 9 July 2015, *op. cit.*; Fakondo, *op. cit.*
[40] Charley & M'Cormack, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-32.
[41] Interview with Adrian Horn, *op. cit.*, p. 3, p. 6; Interview with Keith Biddle conducted on 5 December 2007, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-2.
[42] Interview with Kadi Fakondo, Assistant Inspector General of the Sierra Leone Police, conducted in Freetown on 5 May 2008 by Arthur Boutellis as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 9, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/kadi-fakondo, accessed 21/08/16.
[43] Quoted in Charley & M'Cormack, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

> the divisional commanders…they have problems, they have big problems with these people.'[44]

The more vertical generational and intra-service dynamics produced by IMATT's institutional socialisation thus offered some significant advantages for reforming RSLAF organisational culture, in comparison to the leadership-focused model of generational replacement adopted in the SLP.

Equally, SLP reform was initially facilitated by political support, akin to IMATT's use of civil-military influence to enforce institutional reform. When Biddle left office in 2003, Brima Acha Kamara was appointed IG by the SLPP government on Biddle's recommendation, despite his alignment to the APC. As one of Biddle's new cohort, Kamara proved a reformist officer who continued Biddle's professionalising drive. International advisers hoped that the establishment of an Executive Management Board to run the SLP would help sustain these reforms, by preventing undue political interference on commanders, insofar as collective responsibility for the management of the SLP helped insulate individual senior officers from political pressure.[45] However, international attention shifted away from the institutional dimensions of SLP reform following the introduction of DFID's Justice Sector Development Programme in 2005, which was intended to be led by GOSL.[46] Concerns were subsequently raised that the SLP was increasingly unable to resist neo-patrimonial political interference, particularly after the change of government in 2007.[47] One Sierra Leonean NGO member working with the National Electoral Commission during elections in 2007 and 2008 observed, for example, that 'the police…are afraid of losing their jobs because some of the appointments are political appointments…[In Kono] They will tell you that "Man, make an arrest and someone from Freetown will just call and release that person."'[48]

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[44] Interview with Vincent Dzakpata, United Nations Police Chief of Staff, United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone, conducted in Freetown on 6 May 2008 by Arthur Boutellis as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 5, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/vincent-dzakpata, accessed on 21/08/16.
[45] Interview with Adrian Horn, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.
[46] Anthony Howlett-Bolton, 'Justice Sector Reform', in Albrecht & Jackson, *Views from the Front Line*, *op. cit.*, p. 100.
[47] Albrecht & Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*
[48] Interview with Moi Sellu, Program Officer at the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, Sierra Leone, conducted in Freetown on 30 August 2008 by Nealin Parker as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 14, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/moi-sellu, accessed on 21/08/16.

Thus, the limitations of SLP reform were equally the product of political interference in the institutional processes of the SLP, which in the absence of significant international oversight, proved more pernicious than beneficial. This was typified by the police component of the Presidential Guard, which was manned jointly by police officers from the OSD and RSLAF soldiers. During the 2007 election cycle, both the SLPP and APC hired former wartime combatants to provide personal security for their candidates, contributing significantly to the violence during those elections. The SLPP hired Tom Nyuma, a former SLA lieutenant colonel who had been involved in the NPRC coup, while the APC hired Idrissa 'Letherboot' Kamara. Kamara was also a former "sobel", first a member of the AFRC and subsequently an RUF deputy minister. During the elections, Kamara acted as Koroma's personal bodyguard, and was involved in a brief skirmish with Nyuma at a hotel in Bo, at which it was alleged Nyuma attempted to assassinate Koroma and was himself wounded.[49] After Koroma was elected to the Presidency, Kamara was appointed to the Presidential Guard close protection team, and given senior rank in the SLP. This caused significant consternation in the SLP, which proved unable to resist the appointment.[50] It also caused concern in IMATT, as in Brigadier Cholerton's view, 'there was a degree of unofficial-ness around some of these people doing presidential guard…[a] whiff of, a sort of, private army about them, which didn't look good'.[51]

To an extent, the RSLAF was insulated from such *overtly* political appointments because of the continued international oversight IMATT provided, which remained far more substantial than the international presence in the SLP. Undoubtedly though, the fate of the SLP also underlines the fragility of contested normative change, which is highly reliant on either conducive political conditions *or* the presence of external reformers for a prolonged (in fact, generational) period of time. In both the RSLAF and the SLP, this proved far

[49] International Crisis Group, 'Sierra Leone: A New Era of Reform?', Africa report No. 143 (Dakar/Brussels, 31 July 2008), p. 5; Mohamed Massaquoi, 'Tribute - Tom Nyuma: the Soldier and Politician', *Concord Times*, republished by *All Africa News*, 30 January 2014, online at http://allafrica.com/stories/201401301463.html, accessed on 21/08/16; 'False alarm or Assassination attempt? Ernest Koroma Vs Tom Nyuma', *Awoko News*, n.d., online at http://awoko.org/2007/07/24/false-alarm-or-assassination-attempt-ernest-koroma-vs-tom-nyuma/, accessed on 21/08/16.

[50] Interview with Participant A24, *op. cit.*; Interview with Keith Biddle conducted on 9 July 2015, *op. cit.*; 'In Sierra Leone, Controversy Over Leather Boot', *Awareness Times*, 18 June 1012, online at http://news.sl/drwebsite/exec/view.cgi?archive=8&num=20511, accessed on 21/08/16.

[51] Interview with Brigadier (retd.) Iain Cholerton CBE, Commander IMATT 2007, conducted in Herefordshire on 16 July 2015.

longer than the UK was willing to remain, raising fundamental questions about the ambitions of the reform agendas undertaken.

To a certain extent, similar criticisms can be levelled at IMATT's reform mechanisms in the RSLAF, which, relying to a significant extent on civil-military influence to enact IMATT's chosen changes, had little reciprocal impact on the quality of Sierra Leonean political oversight. Indeed, Sierra Leone's political culture remained tenuously democratic at best throughout IMATT's existence. Voting patterns in both the 2007 and 2012 presidential elections remained decidedly regional and ethnic, and politicians of all hues appear to have attempted to garner electoral support along neo-patrimonial rather than policy lines. Moreover, both elections were marred by violence and public disorder, including extensive use of political paramilitaries composed of former wartime militiamen.[52] Although formally supportive of SSR as a concept, Sierra Leonean political elites continued to approach the RSLAF in a broadly neo-patrimonial ways – with increasing success as IMATT's influence diminished. Even in technical terms, the architecture of civil-military relations put in place by British-led SSR was most lacking with regard to the democratic oversight mechanisms exercised by civilian politicians. In 2008, for instance, Osman Gbla, then the Dean of the faculty of Social Science and Law for Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, concluded that civilian oversight of the security sector in Sierra Leone still needed 'very serious attention':

> 'how do we get civil society to ensure the security forces to be accountable and transparent? How do we get Parliament to ensure that funds given to the security forces are being used judiciously? How do we get them to account? That aspect is a challenge.'[53]

By the time Colonel Martin took command of IMATT, the parliamentary oversight committee on defence had not sat for some considerable time. Martin concluded that,

> 'so long as the political architecture above them remains steady, the armed forces below will remain steady. If the political architecture above them starts unravelling,

[52] Magnus Jörgel & Mats Utas, 'The Mano River Basin Area: Formal and Informal Security Providers in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone', Swedish Defence Research Agency (Stockholm, 2007)

[53] Interview with Osman Gbla, Dean of the Faculty of Social Science and Law at the University of Sierra Leone, conducted in Freetown on 5 May 2008 by Arthur Boutellis, as part of the Innovations for Successful Societies project at Princeton University, p. 8, online at https://successfulsocieties.princeton.edu/interviews/osman-gbla, accessed on 21/08/16.

> in other words if the democratic system is undermined…then I'm not sure how long the armed forces can hold up'.[54]

Although SSR as a concept was only originally intended to reshape security forces in line with wider democratisation, the potential vulnerability of the RSLAF to political subversion despite the presence of a proto-democratic system highlights the fragility of liberal peacebuilding endeavours. At best, normative defence reform can only hope to prevent military subversion of democratic civil-military relations; it cannot prevent political subversion. This adds credence to claims made by Bruneau that the most significant impediment to normative military change by external interventionists remains the Western military inability to address local *political* circumstances.[55]

Yet, as a whole, the RSLAF appears to have retained Western behavioural norms to a far greater degree than the SLP, despite the same political environment. IMATT's generational change was significantly undermined by the process of British withdrawal, but concurrently, the RSLAF's increasing focus on PSOs prevented the total dismantling of IMATT's institutional reforms, by necessitating a degree of objective military capacity and capability reliant on the maintenance of meritocratic rather than political processes. Thus, the reciprocal dynamic between effectiveness and (non-patrimonial, meritocratic) military culture was reinforced by PSO deployments. The demand for operational military effectiveness, which in other circumstances might have necessitated battlefield adaptation, in Sierra Leone bolstered normative institutional reform. Although the RSLMF had deployed troops on ECOWAS operations prior to the Rebel War, the RSLAF's UN-affiliated operations appear to have had a far more significant impact on the military.[56] PSO deployments may well have supported the RSLAF's identity as a rejuvenated and more professional military organisation, as Albrecht and Haenlein contended,[57] but their primary benefit for sustaining democratic civil-military relations was as a practical bulwark against the neo-patrimonialism which had characterised previous RSLMF decay. Here, PSOs proved a

[54] Interview with Colonel (retd.) Jamie Martin, Commander IMATT 2011-3, conducted in Dorset on 21 July 2015.
[55] Thomas C. Bruneau, 'Challenges in Building Partner Capacity: Civil-Military Relations in the United States and New Democracies', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 26:3 (2015), pp. 429-445
[56] Colonel Mike Dent, 'Sierra Leone Background Brief 2002', IMATT internal briefing document (Shrewsbury, 24 July 2002), p. 10.
[57] Peter Albrecht & Cathy Haenlein, 'Sierra Leone's Post-Conflict Peacekeepers', *RUSI Journal*, 160:1 (2015), pp. 26-36

uniquely potent mechanism, because they established a degree of external oversight over RSLAF internal processes, via UN inspections and pre-deployment conditions, which even the RSLAF's "old guard" or political "big men" were willing to accept. As one senior IMATT officer involved in preparing the RSLAF for PSOs remarked, the deployments helped to institutionalise change because failure on PSOs would have been 'a public embarrassment, both internally in Sierra Leone and externally because of course they were deployed.'[58]

Indeed, the institutional reform of the RSLAF, by promoting a more meritocratic, less patrimonial, and more professional military culture, directly supported improvements in RSLAF operational effectiveness. This was seen not only in the RSLAF's PSO deployments, but also in its Ebola response. The fact that RSLAF resourcing and equipment levels remained woeful throughout the period – requiring significant foreign investment to enable PSO deployments – highlights the cultural aspects of this improvement in effectiveness. That PSO deployments continued despite IMATT's withdrawal also suggests that PSOs provided a degree of external oversight, maintaining institutional reforms in lieu of IMATT's protecting influence, despite limited political change. In Sierra Leone, cultural change in the RSLAF was instituted by external intervention, but maintained (albeit imperfectly) because of its functional value.

Accordingly, by examining the institutional mechanisms of military change, this thesis has provided an insight into how military accountability and effectiveness relate, without descending into Huntingtonian tautology.[59] Armed forces are not automatically accountable to civilian government because they are "professional" per se; nor because they are either specifically separated or particularly supervised by civilian elites. They are subordinate to civilian control because they have become inculcated with particular norms of military behaviour that inform democratic civil-military relations, and which are continually maintained and reinforced through military training, education and promotional systems. Civilian involvement in these mechanisms is not automatically problematic; indeed, it may indeed be beneficial, providing it

[58] Interview with Participant A19, a senior British officer in IMATT 2008-11, conducted by Skype on 20 October 2015.
[59] For a discussion, see Thomas C. Bruneau, 'Impediments to Conceptualizing Civil-Military Relations', in Bruneau & Matei, *op. cit.*

reinforces the meritocratic standards required for operational effectiveness. In reciprocal fashion, the need to maintain military effectiveness can limit political usurpation of the military's internal norm-shaping career processes. Thus, the nature of the military's career system and the values against which this operates is the defining element of both military change and military accountability. As shown by this thesis, in the case of exporting democratic civil-military relations, the exact model of civilian control – be it objective or subjective – appears less important than establishing both political and military consensus over the functioning of military career mechanisms, and ensuring that however this is established, it does not impede military effectiveness. In Bruneau's 'trinity of money, careers, and culture',[60] it is the reform of the institutional dimensions of military career structures which affords the best opportunity to change military culture.

This conclusion partially challenges the dominant narrative of liberal intervention, which contends that institutional approaches to instability (like SSR) are intrinsically unable to produce the requisite cultural or behavioural changes required to succeed, and so fail because they are incompatible with pre-existing social and political norms. Instead, it is argued that interventionists – if they must intervene at all – should privilege 'local ownership' and grass-roots agency over the institutions of Weberian statehood or else the social legitimacy of governance will always prove elusive.[61] Accordingly, Krebs argued that organisational change in armed forces has little merit, save when it echoes pre-existing social and political currents in wider society.[62] Yet, the experience of IMATT in Sierra Leone suggests that organisational change in military institutions can reshape local military cultures, and while this cannot fundamentally change local political habits, military habits can nonetheless differ from them. As Suhrke has observed, 'local ownership clearly means "their"

[60] Bruneau, 'Challenges in Building Partner Capacity', *op. cit.*, p. 431.
[61] Robert Egnell & Peter Haldén, 'Laudable, Ahistorical and Overambitious: Security Sector Reform Meets State Formation Theory', *Conflict, Security & Development*, 9:1 (2009), pp. 27-54; Nicolas Lemay-Hébert, 'Statebuilding Without Nation-building? Legitimacy, State Failure and the Limits of the Institutionalist Approach', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 3:1 (2009), pp. 21-45; David Roberts, 'Everyday Legitimacy and Postconflict States: Introduction', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 7:1 (2013), pp. 1-10; Augustine S. J. Park, 'Peacebuilding, the Rule of Law and the Problem of Culture: Assimilation, Multiculturalism, Deployment', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 4:4 (2010), pp. 413-32.
[62] Krebs, 'A School for the Nation?', *op. cit.*; Krebs, 'One Nation under Arms?', *op. cit.*

ownership of "our" ideas',[63] and IMATT was able to generate significant RSLAF ownership of IMATT's norms through institutional redevelopment and socialisation processes, despite the presence of a competing neo-patrimonial culture in the RSLAF and in wider society.

Military Mentoring as a Strategy for Intervention

To a certain extent, the conceptual approaches to overseas intervention advanced by the British military following intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan appear somewhat schizophrenic. On the one hand, the British Army has produced a new and all-encompassing stabilisation doctrine based on its experiences of counter-insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan,[64] which has been lauded for its ambition and simultaneously criticised for its incoherence.[65] On the other hand, the British public has increasingly eschewed such large-scale projects in liberal intervention. Somewhat unexpectedly, the British Parliament rejected the possibility of limited conventional intervention into the Syrian civil war in August 2013,[66] and subsequent British military efforts there and in northern Iraq have been confined to Special Forces operations, aerial support and "train and equip" capacity building. This shift away from liberal peacebuilding and its state- and nation-building corollaries towards "upstream capacity building" was signalled by the British Government's 2011 'Building Stability Overseas Strategy' (BSOS) and its military component, the 2013 'International Defence Engagement Strategy' (IDES),[67] but has manifested itself in proxy-based solutions to securing domestic political preferences overseas.[68]

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[63] Astri Suhrke, 'Reconstruction as Modernisation: The "Post-Conflict" Project in Afghanistan', *Third World Quarterly*, 28:7 (2007), p. 1292.
[64] British Ministry of Defence, 'Joint Doctrine Publication 3-40 Security and Stabilisation: The Military Contribution', Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (Shrivenham, November 2009).
[65] Stuart Griffin, 'Iraq, Afghanistan and the Future of British Military Doctrine: From Counterinsurgency to Stabilization', *International Affairs*, 87:2 (2011), pp. 317–333.
[66] James Strong, 'Interpreting the Syria Vote: Parliament and British Foreign Policy', *International Affairs*, 91:5 (2015), pp. 1123–1139.
[67] British Government, 'Building Stability Overseas Strategy' (London, 2011), online at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/67475/Building-stability-overseas-strategy.pdf accessed 10/03/14.; British Government, 'International Defence Engagement Strategy' (London, 2013), online at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/73171/defence_engagement_strategy.pdf, accessed 27/06/16.
[68] Matthew Ford, 'Influence Without Power? Reframing British Concepts of Military Intervention after 10 years of Counterinsurgency', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 25:3 (2014), pp. 495-500; Patrick Porter, 'Goodbye to All That: On Small Wars and Big Choices', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 25:3 (2014), pp. 685-95.; Robert Johnson, 'Upstream Engagement and

The process of IMATT withdrawal apparently matched this trend in British policy. But unlike subsequent tactically-focused military capacity building, the locus of British military engagement moved up the RSLAF's chain of command as IMATT drew-down. As Brigadier Cholerton, who commanded IMATT in 2007, later explained:

> 'we were able to influence them [the RSLAF] to become democratically accountable because of the great relationship that we had with them…and [so] we were able to operate at the strategic level and the operational level with those who were influencers of that decision. To be operationally effective you've got to work at a much lower level which requires much larger numbers. So it's probably easier to work with less numbers at the strategic-operational level to influence the decision makers to become democratically accountable, rather than working in these huge numbers at the tactical level – training, embedding with them, mentoring, advising. It would be ideal to both, but its resource driven and there were other priorities for UK at the time.'[69]

Lieutenant Colonel Edkins, a British officer serving as ISAT was established, similarly characterised IMATT's eventual focus on top-down engagement with the RSLAF as a product of limited British resources, alongside the need to harness political support to maintain change:

> 'With IMATT, there was initially an unwritten assumption that the end-state would be a normal training mission, a BMATT. Success was not having IMATT, but a standard BMATT, which would have meant that we maintained a bottom-up approach.
>
> The idea of focusing top-down was a bit of a no-brainer after Afghanistan and Iraq. There was recognition that with fewer resources, you had a choice of sustaining a training base or…influence at the strategic level – you could not do both…
>
> If I have to make a choice between top-down or bottom-up, I would choose top-down, because without political buy-in, and the resources that go with it, you are not addressing long-term problems. Unless you do that, the minute you take away support it will all fall over; if the politicians do not see it as important, then it doesn't matter how good the soldiers are.'[70]

Therefore, the implicit assumption behind IMATT's approach as it drew down was that to ensure normative change in the RSLAF, IMATT and ISAT must work from the strategic and political level down through the RSLAF as an institution. Had the objective been simply to improve the RSLAF's tactical capabilities, a wider training mission focusing on tactical mentoring would have been more appropriate – but as IMATT's size and resources diminished, it could not simultaneously carry out both.

Downstream Entanglements: The Assumptions, Opportunities, and Threats of Partnering', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 25:3 (2014), pp. 647-668; Sibylle Scheipers, 'Auxiliaries at War in the Middle East', *Survival*, 57:4 (2015), pp. 121-138.

[69] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*

[70] Lieutenant Colonel Joe Edkins, quoted in Albrecht & Paul Jackson, *Securing Sierra Leone*, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-4.

Yet, as this thesis has shown, the implicit assumption that defence engagement intended to improve local military effectiveness can be primarily conducted through tactical mentoring alone is not supported by the relationship between military cultural change and military effectiveness seen in the RSLAF. The Sierra Leonean experience suggests that tactical capacity building is an unlikely mechanism for external interventionists to produce profound military transformation in foreign armed forces, particularly in those developing in a neo-patrimonial political climate. As British "train and equip" capacity building programmes during the Rebel War demonstrate, external interventionists can support local military adaptation to a limited degree. But in Sierra Leone, these programmes failed to radically improve RSLAF military effectiveness, because, lacking strong and coherent institutional components, they were unable to influence the organisational culture of the SLAF, which was itself a significant impediment to improved combat performance. The cultural norms of RSLAF behaviour were only really challenged once IMATT began to use institutional reform to re-socialise the RSLAF officer corps through training and education, but also through career incentives like promotion contingent on normative behaviour.

This raises questions about the utility of mentoring as a primary means of implementing externally-desired change. In his examination of Western mentoring in the Afghan state administration, Rosén concluded that as a strategy for implementing change, mentoring reflected the core principles of neo-liberal governmentality. Informed by New Public Management ideas, Rosén described mentoring as 'an activity that aims at correcting behavioural nuances' by steering 'free individuals into common action without restraining their freedom by laws and regulations'. As such, Rosén found that mentoring, in principle, rejected bureaucratic institutional mechanisms 'by elevating individual subjectivity as the key reform area, and decentralising the creation of reform plans to its most radical site – the individual.'[71] IMATT certainly did engage in mentoring as a personal development activity for RSLAF officers. Brigadier Cholerton, for example, described how:

[71] Frederik Ferdinand Rosén, 'No Words will Deliver Anything: Coaching and Mentoring as Neoliberal Governance Strategy in the Afghan State Administration', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 5:2 (2011), pp. 154-5.

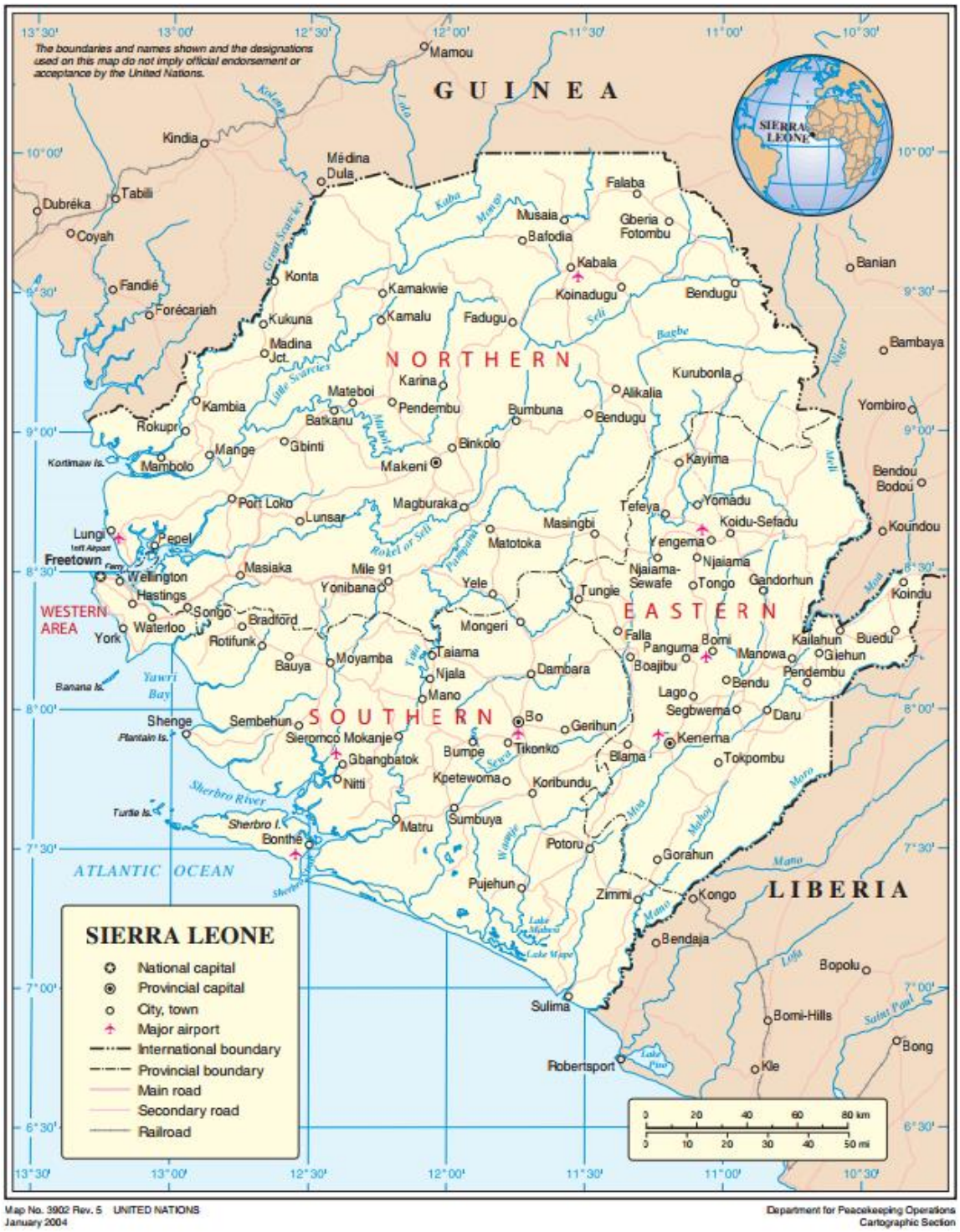
> 'if you want a result you had to do more yourself, if you wanted to try and educate and allow them to make mistakes and have failures you sort of backed off…it was always a constant sort of balancing act of how much you get engaged, how much you pull back, how much you allow failure to happen.'[72]

Yet, contrary to Rosén's description of (largely unsuccessful) mentoring in Afghanistan, the highly political and contested nature of reform in the RSLAF highlights the importance of institutional processes in shaping mentee's behaviour. Indeed, because normative change directly challenged the vested patrimonial interests of many senior RSLAF commanders, implementing change in Sierra Leone was sometimes entirely contingent upon highly coercive political leverage – including the dismissal of "spoilers" and the marginalisation of recalcitrant or ineffective individuals. This experience is at odds with Rosén's vision of mentoring as '"soft" governance'. While "friends of IMATT" may well have benefitted from a collegiate approach to personal development, "spoilers" were either marginalised or coerced into change through the manipulation of institutional processes – and it was these institutional processes which ultimately proved essential to changing the RSLAF's organisational culture.

This thesis has demonstrated that military culture affects the character and form of military change, but equally, through *institutional* processes of *socialisation,* military change can in time reshape military culture. The relationship between organisational culture and institutional processes is reciprocal, and in consequence, external interventionists may enduringly change local military practices to improve both effectiveness and civil-military relations, providing they are able to reshape the socialising aspects of the military institution. In Sierra Leone, change in the RSLAF was driven externally by IMATT using civil-military pressure to push through institutional changes, which in turn would be cemented through intra-service rivalry and a structured process of generational replacement. Ultimately, IMATT withdrew before their new norms were widely accepted in the RSLAF, resulting in only a partial improvement in military effectiveness and Sierra Leonean civil-military relations. Nonetheless, the reciprocal relationship between institutional change and organisational culture seen in IMATT's reform of the RSLAF demonstrates that external interventionists can effectively build other peoples' armies.

[72] Interview with Brigadier Iain Cholerton, *op. cit.*

Annex: Map of Sierra Leone



Source: United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations Cartographic Section, 'Map Number 3902 Revision 5', January 2004, online at http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/sierrale.pdf, accessed on 16/02/16.

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